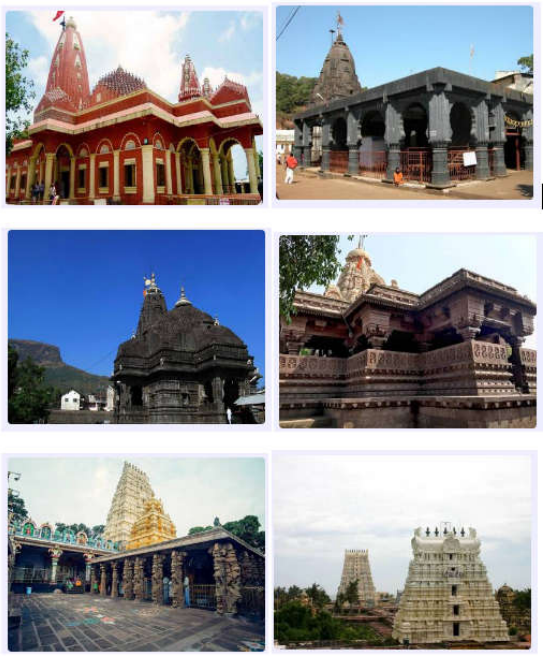
## Dr. M. Thirumaleshwar

# Twelve Jyotirlinga temples

# and

# Shivarathri celebrations



# Twelve Jyotirlinga temples

# and

# Shivarathri celebrations

***Compiled by***

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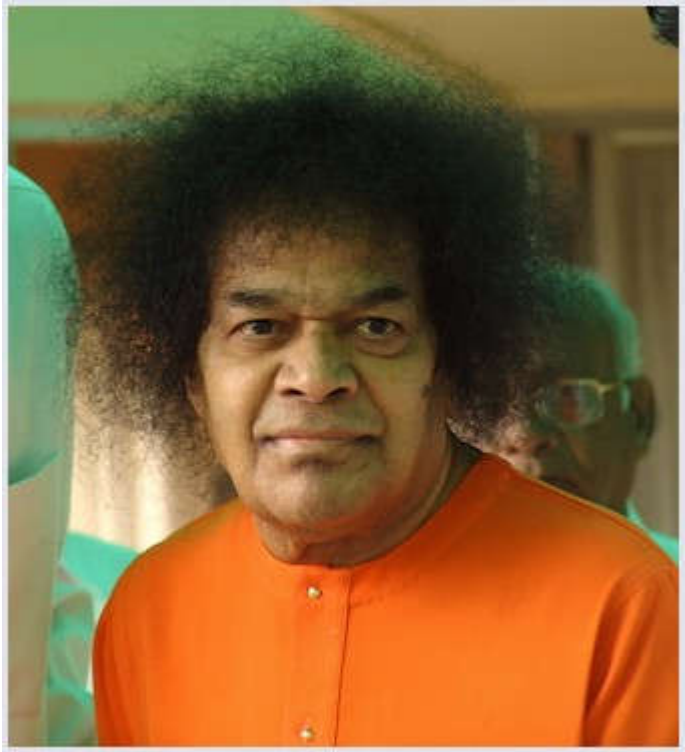
# *Dedication*

**This work is lovingly dedicated at the lotus feet of**

**Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba**



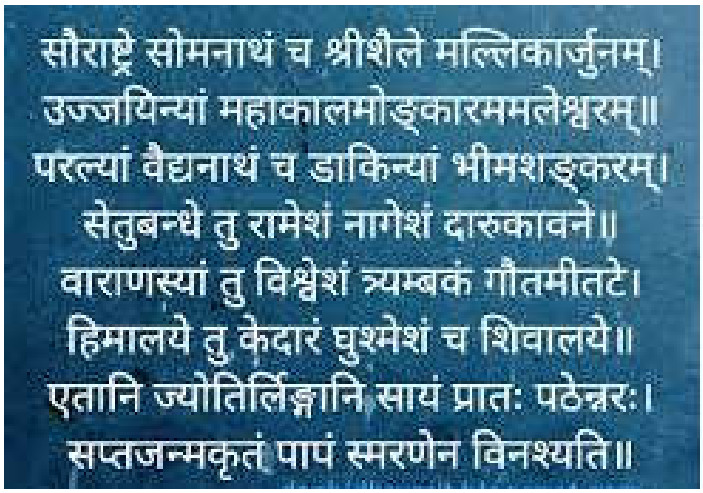
"There is only one religion, the religion of Love.
There is only one caste, the caste of Humanity.
There is only one language, the language of the Heart.
There is only one God, He is Omnipresent."

**"Help Ever, Hurt Never!"**

***……Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba***

## Twelve Jyotirlingas:

## Dwadasha Jyotirlinga stotram:




**Watch video: Shri Dwadash Jyotirlingam Stotram by Anuradha Paudwal**

**Link:** [https://youtu.be/K7r_r_yTPL4](https://youtu.be/K7r_r_yTPL4)

# रावण रचित शिव तांडव स्तोत्र

जटाटवीगलज्जल प्रवाहपावितस्थले
गलेऽवलम्ब्य लम्बितां भुजंगतुंगमालिकाम्।
डमड्डमड्डमन्निनादवड्डमर्वयं
चकार चंडतांडवं तनोतु नः शिवः शिवम ॥1॥

जटा कटा हसंभ्रम भ्रमन्निलिंपनिर्झरी ।
विलोलवी चिवल्लरी विराजमानमूर्धनि ।
धगद्धगद्ध गज्ज्वलल्ललाट पट्टपावके
किशोरचंद्रशेखरे रतिः प्रतिक्षणं ममं ॥2॥

धरा धरेंद्र नंदिनी विलास बंधुवंधुर-
स्फुरदृगंत संतति प्रमोद मानमानसे ।
कृपाकटा क्षधारणी निरुद्धदुर्धरापदि
कवचिद्विगम्बरे मनो विनोदमेतु वस्तुनि ॥3॥

जटा भुजं गपिंगल स्फुरत्फणामणिप्रभा-
कदंबकुंकुम द्रवप्रलिप्त दिग्वधूमुखे ।
मदांध सिंधु रस्फुरत्वगुत्तरीयमेदुरे
मनो विनोदद्भुतं बिंभर्तु भूतभर्तरि ॥4॥

सहस्र लोचन प्रभृत्य शेषलेखशेखर-
प्रसून धूलिधोरणी विधूसरांघ्रिपीठभूः ।
भुजंगराज मालया निबद्धजाटजूटकः
श्रिये चिराय जायतां चकोर बंधुशेखरः ॥5॥

ललाट चत्वरज्वलद्धनंजयस्फुरिगभा-
निपीतपंचसायकं निमन्निलिंपनायम् ।
सुधा मयुख लेखया विराजमानशेखरं
महा कपालि संपदे शिरोजयालमस्तू नः ॥6॥

करात भाल पट्टिकाधगद्धगद्धगज्ज्वल-
द्धनंजया धरीकृतप्रचंडपंचसायके ।
धराधरेंद्र नंदिनी कुचाग्रचित्रपत्रक-
प्रकल्पनैकशिल्पिनि त्रिलोचने मतिर्मम ॥7॥

नवीन मेघ मंडली निरुद्धदुर्धरस्फुर-
त्कुहु निशीथिनीतमः प्रबंधबंधुकंधरः ।
निलिम्पनिर्झरि धरस्तनोतु कृत्ति सिंधुरः
कलानिधानबंधुरः श्रियं जगद्धुरंधरः ॥8॥

प्रफुल्ल नील पंकज प्रपंचकालिमच्छटा-
विडंबि कंठकंध रारुचि प्रबंधकंधरम्
स्मरच्छिदं पुरच्छिंद भवच्छिदं मखच्छिदं
गजच्छिदांधकच्छिदं तमंतकच्छिदं भजे ॥9॥

अगर्वसर्वमंगला कलाकदम्बमंजरी-
रसप्रवाह माधुरी विजृंभणा मधुव्रतम् ।
स्मरांतकं पुरातकं भावंतकं मखांतकं
गजांतकांधकांतकं तमंतकांतकं भजे ॥10॥

जयत्वदभ्रविभ्रम भ्रमद्भुजंगमस्फुर-
द्धगद्धगद्वि निर्गमत्कराल भाल हव्यवाट्-
धिमिद्धिमिद्धिमि नन्मृदंगतुंगमंगल-
ध्वनिक्रमप्रवर्तित प्रचण्ड ताण्डवः शिवः ॥11॥

दृषद्विचित्रतल्पयोर्भुजंग मौक्तिकमस्रजो-
र्गरिष्ठरत्नलोष्टयोः सुहृद्विपक्षपक्षयोः ।
तृणारविंदचक्षुषोः प्रजामहीमहेन्द्रयोः
समं प्रवर्तयन्मनः कदा सदाशिवं भजे ॥12॥

कदा निलिंपनिर्झरी निकुजकोटरे वसन्
विमुक्तदुर्मतिः सदा शिरःस्थमंजलिं वहन्।
विमुक्तलोललोचनो ललामभाललग्नकः
शिवेति मंत्रमुच्चरन्कदा सुखी भवाम्यहम्॥13॥

निलिम्प नाथनागरी कदम्ब मौलमल्लिका-
निगुम्फनिर्भक्षरन्म धूष्णिकामनोहरः ।
तनोतु नो मनोमुदं विनोदिनींमहनिशं
परिश्रय परं पदं तदंगजत्विषां चयः ॥14॥

प्रचण्ड वाडवानल प्रभाशुभप्रचारणी
महाष्टसिद्धिकामिनी जनावहूत जल्पना ।
विमुक्त वाम लोचनो विवाहकालिकध्वनिः
शिवेति मन्त्रभूषगो जगज्जयाय जायताम् ॥15॥

इमं हि नित्यमेव मुक्तमुक्तमोत्तम स्तवं
पठन्स्मरन् ब्रुवन्नरो विशुद्धमेति संततम्।
हरे गुरौ सुभक्तिमाशु याति नांयथा गतिं
विमोहनं हि देहना तु शंकरस्य चिंतनम ॥16॥

पूजाऽवसानसमये दशवक्त्रगीतं
यः शम्भूपूजनमिदं पठति प्रदोषे ।
तस्य स्थिरां रथगजेंद्रतुरंगयुक्तां
लक्ष्मी सदैव सुमुखीं प्रददाति शम्भुः ॥17॥

॥ इति शिव तांडव स्तोत्रं संपूर्णम्॥ > >

1. **Link to Shiva tandava stotram, sung by Shankar Mahadevan:**

**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S980-z1qx3g**

2. **Link to Shiva tandava stotram with Sanskrit lyrics:**

**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QvUF4LkmwKo**

# PREFACE

'Jyotirlinga' is Lord Shiva appearing as a bright column of Light. It is also 'swayambhu' (created on its own, not by any sculptor).

There are many legends about the Jyotirlingas in our scriptures.

**Legend about Jyotirlingas: (Ref: Wikipedia)**

According to Śiva Mahāpurāṇa, once Brahma (the god of creation) and Vishnu (the form of God during preservation) had an argument over supremacy of creation.[1] To settle the debate, Supreme God Shiva pierced the three worlds appearing as a huge infinite pillar of light, the Jyotirlinga which later cooled into the holy mountain Annamalai (on which the Temple of Arunachaleshwara is located.)

Vishnu and Brahma split their ways to downwards and upwards respectively to find the end of the light in either direction. Brahma lied that he found out the end, while Vishnu conceded his defeat. This lie of Brahma angered Shiva making him curse Brahma that even though he is the creator of the universe he would not be worshipped. The jyotirlinga is the Supreme Shiva, partless reality, out of which Shiva appeared in another form, Lingodbhava. The jyotirlinga shrines are temples where Shiva appeared as a fiery column of light.[2][3]

Originally there were believed to be 64 jyotirlingas while twelve of them are considered to be very auspicious and holy.[1] Each of the twelve jyotirlinga sites take the name of the presiding deity, each considered a different manifestation of Shiva.[4] At all these sites, the primary image is lingam representing the beginningless and endless Stambha pillar, symbolising the infinite nature of Shiva.[4][5][6]

**Twelve important Jyotirlingas are mentioned in the following shloka:**

**सौराष्ट्रे सोमनाथं च श्रीशैले मल्लिकार्जुनम्। उज्जयिन्यां महाकालमोङ्कारममलेश्वरम्॥**

**परल्यां वैद्यनाथं च डाकिन्यां भीमशङ्करम्। सेतुबन्धे तु रामेशं नागेशं दारुकावने॥**

**वाराणस्यां तु विश्वेशं त्र्यम्बकं गौतमीतटे। हिमालये तु केदारं घुश्मेशं च शिवालये॥**

**एतानि ज्योतिर्लिङ्गानि सायं प्रातः पठेन्नरः। सप्तजन्मकृतं पापं स्मरणेन विनश्यति॥**

**एतेशां दर्शनादेव पातकं नैव तिष्ठति। कर्मक्षयो भवेत्तस्य यस्य तुष्टो महेश्वराः॥**:

**द्वादश ज्योतिर्लिंग स्तोत्रम्**

i.e. The twelve jyotirlingas are:

Somnath in Gir Somnath, Gujarat

Mallikarjuna in Srisailam, Andhra Pradesh

Mahakaleshwara in Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh

Omkareshwara in Khandwa, Madhya Pradesh

Vaidyanath in Deoghar, Jharkhand

Bhimashankar in Pune, Maharashtra

Rameshwara in Rameswaram, Tamil Nadu

Nageshwara in Dwarka, Gujarat

Vishveshwara in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh

Trayambakeshwara in Nashik, Maharashtra

Kedarnath in Rudraprayag, Uttarakhand

Ghrishneshwara in Aurangabad, Maharashtra

In this ebook, first, we describe about the 12 Jyotirlingas with reference to: the place, history, legends, architecture, photos and videos to show important features of temple and the Shivarathri celebrations in each temple.

Next, in Appendix-I, we give information about Pashupatinath temple in Kathmandu, Nepal since this is also known as a Jyotirlinga, closely connected to Kedarnath by legends.

In Appendix-II, an account of Sri Sathya Sai Baba's visits to following pilgrimage sites are given: (a) Badrinath in Himalayas, (b) Ayodhya, Allahabad and Varanasi, and (c) Mathura, Dwaraka and Somanath in Gujarart.

Appendix-III contains two famous Shiva stotras, and links to many sites to get information on Vedas, Aranyakas, Upanishads etc and for many stotras, shlokas, ashtottaras and matters of spiritual interest.

**Acknowledgements:**

Prof. K. S. Bhat, formerly Professor at the Administrative Staff College of India, Hyderabad (elder brother of my wife, Kala), is a highly respected elder member of the Kolari household. He is also a 'Nature lover' and activist. He organized, spearheaded and fought successfully to reclaim, renovate and redeem the famous Sarakki lake in Bangalore. He suggested that I may compile the information on Shivarathri celebrations in the 12 Jyotirlinga temples. I took up the suggestion and this ebook is the result. I express my sincere THANKS to my brother-in-law Prof. K. S. Bhat for his suggestion and also for encouraging me all the way.

Many of my friends and relatives have actively encouraged me in my attempt to compile this book. I sincerely thank them for their support.

My wife Kala, who has always silently supported me in my literary works, sacrificing much of her time, has been a source of strength. I express my deep appreciation to her.

I have drawn heavily from many references, viz. Wikipedia, Art of living, Official websites of respective Jyotirlinga temples, and associated Youtube videos etc.

***Finally, I express my immense gratitude to Sri Sathya Sai Baba for His Grace and blessings to initiate, continue and complete this work.***

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April, 2021

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https://issuu.com/m.thirumaleshwar/docs/sadhana_--_path_of_karma__action__./1

**Link to free ebook: Glory of Holy Feet of Guru… in Kannada language**

http://issuu.com/m.thirumaleshwar/docs/glory_of_holy_feet_of_guru..._in_ka

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**http://issuu.com/m.thirumaleshwar/docs/true_guru_and_his_greatness_----fro**

**Bhagavan Buddha (Kannada) …….. from teachings of Sri Sathya Sai Baba:**

**http://free.yudu.com/item/details/3900025/Bhagavan-Budha--Kannada--...-from-teachings-of-Sri-Sathya-Sai-Baba**

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**All ebooks based on Sai teachings:**

https://issuu.com/m.thirumaleshwar/docs

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**Link to Youtube video: Human Values and Educare ... from teachings of Sri Sathya Sai Baba:**

https://youtu.be/fqXmLvaTRkI

**Link to Youtube video: Greatness of Guru… in Kannada language ... from teachings of Sri Sathya Sai Baba:**

https://youtu.be/xJFU9eqVMa8

**Link to Youtube video: Sadhana – Path of 'Namasmarana' ... from teachings of Sri Sathya Sai Baba:**

https://youtu.be/40qQI6EyBOw

**Link to Youtube video: True Guru and His Greatness ... from teachings of Sri Sathya Sai Baba**

https://youtu.be/2xqRv1eMl7Q

**Purpose of Life and Ways of Sadhana ... from teachings of Sri Sathya Sai Baba:**

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**Link to Youtube video: Sadhana – Path of 'Bhakti' ... from teachings of Sri Sathya Sai Baba:**

https://youtu.be/czgI-jU77y0

**Link to Youtube video: Sadhana – Path of 'Karma' ... from teachings of Sri Sathya Sai Baba:**

---

https://youtu.be/kAaEpaTxPRo

**Link to Youtube video: Sri Sathya Sai Suprabhatam – sung by P. Susheela, and illustrated with photos:**

https://youtu.be/LnD2jXkRlp8

**Link to Youtube video: Yoga and Dhyana (Kannada) ... from teachings of Sri Sathya Sai Baba:**

https://youtu.be/npCFBZRkuiI

**Link to: 'God is eternal witness (Kannada)': You tube video:**

https://youtu.be/DmzQn9QChx4

**Also, see:**

**Prashanthi Bhajans:**

http://prasanthi-mandir-bhajan.net/24kbhajan/

**Shlokas, Rudram etc by Pandits on Shivarathri day in Puttaparthy:**

---

https://drive.google.com/file/d/13zrylzXUWlXWlll3eTQBAeIYZvX8xrZB/view?usp=sharing

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**Links to download of original PDF files:**

**Glory of Holy Feet of Guru … in Kannada language:**

**https://app.box.com/s/mbcw1zsy1o5s1l5gk9exi3jkuceka8n7**

**Swami's teachings to Teachers, Human values & Educare:**

**https://app.box.com/s/cee1y3ptuvwxdw0sb2t4qtq3swcens6r**

**Swami's teachings… Purpose of life, Sadhana – Path of Jnana, Bhakti, Karma:**

**https://app.box.com/s/kovqfemjyjkaqn42e7hu2xmwqzkiga08**

## 1. Somanath Jyotirlinga temple

**Ref: Wikipedia:**

The **Somnath temple** (also known as the Deo Patan) located in Veraval in Saurashtra on the western coast of Gujarat, India is believed to be the first among the twelve *Jyotirlinga* shrines of Shiva.[1] It is an important pilgrimage and tourist spot of Gujarat. Reconstructed several times in the past after repeated destruction by several Muslim invaders and rulers,[2][3][4][5][6] the present mandir was reconstructed in the Chaulukya style of Hindu temple architecture and completed in May 1951. The reconstruction was started under the orders of the Home Minister of India Vallabhbhai Patel and completed after

his death.[7][8] Presently Prime minister of India Narendra Modi is the chairman of Somnath Mandir trust.[9][10][11]

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**Jyotirlinga:**

According to tradition, the *Shivalinga* in Somnath is one of the 12 *jyotirlingas* in India, where Shiva is believed to have appeared as a fiery column of light. The *jyotirlingas* are taken as the supreme, undivided reality out of which Shiva partly appears.[13][14]

Each of the 12 *jyotirlinga* sites take the name of a different manifestation of Shiva.[15] At all these sites, the primary image is a lingam representing the beginning-less and endless stambha (pillar), symbolizing the infinite nature of Shiva.[15][16][17] In addition to the one at Somnath, the others are Mallikarjuna at Srisailam in Andhra Pradesh, Mahakaleswar at Ujjain in Madhya Pradesh, Omkareshwar in Madhya Pradesh, Kedarnath in Uttrakhand, Bhimashankar at Pune in Maharashtra, Viswanath at Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh, Tryambakeshwar at Nashik in Maharashtra, Vaijyanath Temple in Deoghar District of Jharkhand, Aundha Nagnath at Aundha in Hingoli District in Maharashtra, Ramanathaswamy Temple at Rameshwaram in Tamil Nadu and Grishneshwar at Ellora near Aurangabad, in Maharashtra.[18][19]

**Legend:**

Shree Somnath is first among the twelve Aadi Jyotirlings of India. It has a strategic location on the western coast of India.

Ancient Indian traditions maintain a close relationship of Somnath with release of Chandra (Moon God) from the curse of his father-in-law Daksha Prajapati.

Moon was married to Twenty-Seven daughters of Daksha. However, he favoured Rohini and neglected other queens. The aggrieved Daksha cursed Moon and the Moon lost power of light.

With the advice of Prajapita Brahma, Moon arrived at the Prabhas Teerth and worshipped Bhagvan Shiva.

Pleased with the great penance and devotion of Moon, Bhagvan Shiva blessed him and relieved him from the curse of darkness.

Pauranic traditions maintain that Moon had built a golden temple, followed by a silver temple by Ravana.

Bhagvan Shree Krishna is believed to have built Somnath temple with Sandalwood.

The research based on ancient Indian classical texts show that first Somnath Jyotirling Pran-Pratistha was done on the auspicious third day of brighter half of Shravan month during the tenth Treta yug of Vaivswat Manvantar.

Swami Shri Gajananand Saraswatiji, Chairman of Shrimad Aadhya Jagadguru Shankaracharya Vedic Shodh Sansthan, Varanasi suggested that the said first temple was built 7,99,25,105 years ago as derived from the traditions of Prabhas Khand of Skand Puran. Thus, this temple is a perennial source of inspiration for millions of Hindus since time immemorial.

The Moon God is said to have been relieved from the curse of his father-in-law Daksha Prajapati by the blessings of Bhagvan Somnath.

In the Shiva Purana and Nandi Upapurana, Shiva said, `I am always present everywhere but specially in 12 forms and places as the Jyotirlingas`. Somnath is one of these 12 holy places. This is the first among the twelve holy Shiva Jyotirlings.

The later sources of history account for several desecrations by Muslims invaders during eleventh to eighteen century A.D. The temple was rebuilt every time with the reconstructive spirit of the people.

The modern temple was reconstructed with the resolve of Sardar Patel who visited the ruins of Somnath temple on November 13 1947.

Then President of India, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, did the Pran-Pratistha at the existing temple on 11 May 1951.

Other spots in the temple are Shri Kapardi Vinayak and Shri Hanuman Temple in addition to Vallabhghat. Vallabhghat is a beautiful sunset point. The temple is illuminated every evening. Similarly, the Sound & Light Show “Jay Somnath” is also displayed every night during 8.00 to 9.00, which allows the pilgrims an ethereal experience in the backdrop of grand Somnath temple and the holy wave sounds of the Ocean.

Ahalyabai temple is also close by, wh  ich was built by the queen mother Shri Ahalyabai Holker during 1782. This temple maintained the Pooja Parampara of Bhagvan Shiva during the hostile political conditions.

**History**:

The site of Somnath has been a pilgrimage site from ancient times on account of being a *triveni sangam* (the confluence of three rivers: Kapila, Hiran and the mythical Saraswati). Soma, the Moon god, is believed to have lost his lustre due to a curse, and he bathed in the Sarasvati River at this site to regain it. The result is the waxing and waning of the moon, no doubt an allusion to the waxing and waning of the tides at this seashore location. The name of the town *Prabhas*, meaning lustre, as well as the alternative names *Someshvar* and *Somnath* ("the lord of the moon" or "the moon god") arise from this tradition.[20]

According to popular tradition documented by J. Gordon Melton, the first Shiva temple at Somnath is believed to have been built at some unknown time in the past. The second temple is said to have been built at the same site by the "Yadava kings" of Vallabhi around 649 CE. In 725 CE, Al-Junayd, the Arab governor of Sindh is said to have destroyed the second temple as part of his invasions of Gujarat and Rajasthan. The Gurjara-Pratihara king Nagabhata II is said to have constructed the third temple in 815 CE, a large structure of red sandstone.[21]

However, there is no historical record of an attack on Somnath by Al-Junayd. Nagabhata II is known to have visited *tirthas* in Saurashtra, including *Someshvara* (the Lord of the Moon), which may or may not be a reference to a Shiva temple because the town itself was known by that name.[22] The Chaulukya (Solanki) king Mularaja possibly built the first temple at the site sometime before 997 CE, even though some historians believe that he may have renovated a smaller earlier temple.[23]

**Ruined Somnath temple, 1869**

In 1024, during the reign of Bhima I, the prominent Turkic Muslim ruler Mahmud of Ghazni raided Gujarat, plundering the Somnath temple and breaking its *jyotirlinga*. He took away a booty of 20 million dinars.[2][3] Historians expect the damage to the temple by Mahmud to have been minimal because there are records of pilgrimages to the temple in 1038, which make no mention of any

damage to the temple.[24] However, powerful legends with intricate detail developed in the Turko-Persian literature regarding Mahmud's raid,[25] which "electrified" the Muslim world according to scholar Meenakshi Jain.[26] They later boasted that Mahmud had killed 50,000 devotees who tried to defend the temple, a formulaic figure.[4][27]

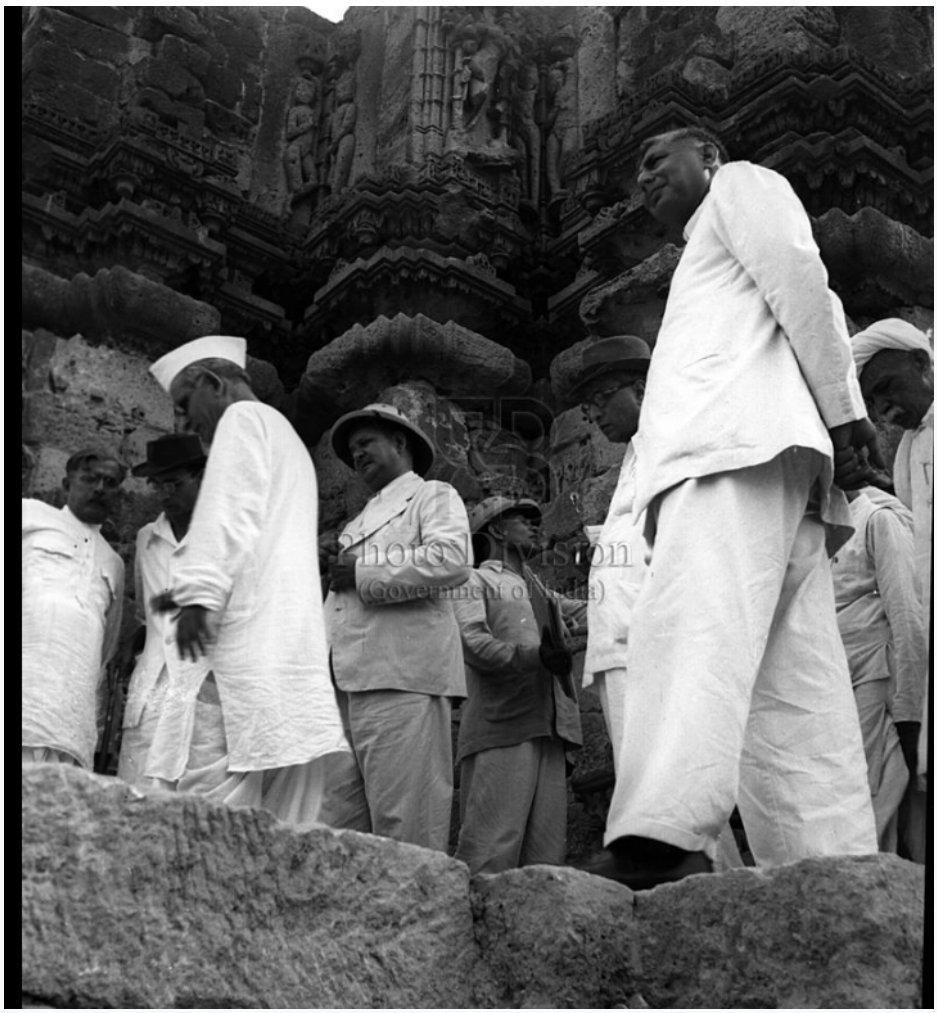
The temple at the time of Mahmud's attack appears to have been a wooden structure, which is said to have decayed in time (*kalajirnam*). Kumarapala (r. 1143–72) rebuilt it in "excellent stone and studded it with jewels," according to an inscription in 1169.[28][29]

During its 1299 invasion of Gujarat, Alauddin Khalji's army, led by Ulugh Khan, defeated the Vaghela king Karna, and sacked the Somnath temple.[30][31] Legends in the later texts *Kanhadade Prabandha* (15th century) and *Khyat* (17th century) state that the Jalore ruler Kanhadadeva later recovered the Somnath idol and freed the Hindu prisoners, after an attack on the Delhi army near Jalore.[32] However, other sources state that the idol was taken to Delhi, where it was thrown to be trampled under the feet of Muslims.[33] These sources include the contemporary and near-contemporary texts including Amir Khusrau's *Khazainul-Futuh*, Ziauddin Barani's *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi* and Jinaprabha Suri's *Vividha-tirtha-kalpa*. It is possible that the story of Kanhadadeva's rescue of the Somnath idol is a fabrication by the later writers. Alternatively, it is possible that the Khalji army was taking multiple idols to Delhi, and Kanhadadeva's army retrieved one of them.[34]

The temple was rebuilt by Mahipala I, the Chudasama king of Saurashtra in 1308 and the *lingam* was installed by his son Khengara sometime between 1331 and 1351.[35] As late as the 14th century, Gujarati Muslim pilgrims were noted by Amir Khusrow to stop at that temple to pay their respects before departing for the Hajj pilgrimage.[36] In 1395, the temple was destroyed for the third time by Zafar Khan, the last governor of Gujarat under the Delhi Sultanate and later founder of Gujarat Sultanate.[37] In 1451, it was desecrated by Mahmud Begada, the Sultan of Gujarat.[38]

By 1665, the temple, one of many, was ordered to be destroyed by Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.[39] In 1702, he ordered that if Hindus revived worship there, it should be demolished completely.[40]

**Reconstruction during 1950–1951**[edit]



**K. M. Munshi with archaeologists and engineers of the Government of India, Bombay, and Saurashtra, with the ruins of Somnath Temple in the background, July 1950.**

Before independence, Veraval was part of the Junagadh State, whose ruler had acceded to Pakistan in 1947. After India refused to accept his decision, the state was made a part of India and Deputy Prime Minister Patel came to Junagadh on 12 November 1947 to direct the stabilization of the state by the Indian Army and at the same time ordered the reconstruction of the Somnath temple.[49]

When Patel, K. M. Munshi and other leaders of the Congress went to Mahatma Gandhi with their proposal to reconstruct the Somnath temple, Gandhi blessed the move, but suggested that the funds for the construction should be collected from the public and the temple should not be funded by the state. He expressed that he was proud to associate himself to the project of renovation of the temple.[50] However, soon both Gandhi and Sardar Patel died and the task of reconstruction of the temple continued under Munshi, who was the Minister for Food and Civil Supplies, Government of India headed by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru.[50]

The ruins were pulled down in October 1950 and the mosque present at that site was shifted few kilometres away by using construction vehicles.[51] In May 1951, Rajendra Prasad, the first President of the Republic of India, invited by K M Munshi, performed the installation ceremony for the temple.[52] The President said in his address, "It is my view that the reconstruction of the Somnath Temple will be complete on that day when not only a magnificent edifice will arise on this foundation, but the mansion of India's prosperity will be really that prosperity of which the ancient temple of Somnath was a symbol."[53] He added: "The Somnath temple signifies that the power of reconstruction is always greater than the power of destruction."[53]

**Architecture of the present temple:**

**Bāṇastambha (Arrow Pillar)**

The present temple is built in the Chaulukya style of temple architecture or "Kailash Mahameru Prasad" style[54] and reflects the skill of the Sompura Salats,

one of Gujarat's master masons. The temple's śikhara, or main spire, is 15 metres in height, and it has an 8.2-metre-tall flag pole at the top.[54]

The temple is situated at such a place that there is no land in a straight line between Somnath seashore until Antarctica, such an inscription in Sanskrit is found on the *Bāṇastambha* (Sanskrit: **बाणस्तम्भ**, lit. *arrow pillar*) erected on the sea-protection wall. The Bāṇastambha mentions that it stands at a point on the Indian landmass that is the first point on land in the north to the South Pole at that particular longitude

Location of Jyotirlinga Temples with name of Jyotirlinga as label.

**Ref: https://www.artofliving.org/mahashivratri/somnath-jyotirlinga**

**Somanath Jyotirlinga:**

Jyotirlingas are sacred shrines of Lord Shiva; it is believed that Lord Shiva himself visited these places and hence they have a special place in the hearts of devotees. There are 12 of them in India.

*Jyotirlinga* means 'column or pillar of light'. The *'stambha'* symbol represents that there is no beginning or end.

When Lord Brahma and Lord Vishnu had an argument about who was the supreme god, Lord Shiva appeared as a column of light and asked each one to find the ends. Neither could do it. It is believed that the places where these columns of light fell is where the *jyotirlingas* are located.

**The most sacred of the 12 jyotirlingas in India is the Somnath Jyotirlinga.**

## Where is the Somnath Jyotirlinga located?

The Somnath temple is located in Prabhas Patan in Saurashtra, West Gujarat in India – at the confluence of the mythological Saraswati, Hiranya and Kapila rivers – the Triveni Sangam.

It is considered to be the first of the jyotirlingas – the first place where Lord Shiva manifested himself.

## History of Somnath Jyotirlinga:

It is believed that the original temple was built by the Moon God with gold in the *Satya Yuga*; by Ravana in Treta Yuga in silver; and by Lord Krishna in Dwapara Yuga in sandalwood.

This temple has been looted and demolished many times by various invaders – by Mahmud of Ghazni (1024), Afzal Khan, Ala-ud-din Khilji's commander (1296), Muzaffar Shah (1375), Mahmud Begada (1451), and later Aurangzeb (1665).

**Many rulers reconstructed the temple**: Shri Vikramaditya of Ujjaini (about 2500 years ago), the Vallabhi kings (in the period 480-767 CE), Bhimadeva of Anhilawada (in 11th century AD), and Khangara, the king of Junagadh (in 1351 AD) among many others.

It has been reconstructed about 17 times! The modern structure has been constructed by India's former deputy Prime Minister Sardar Vallabhai Patel between 1947 and 1951 in sandstone.

## What is the story behind Somnath Jyotirlinga?

It is believed that Chandra, the moon god, was married to the 27 daughters of Daksha Prajapati. However, he favored Rohini over all the rest. This angered Prajapati, who insisted that he be impartial in his affections. When Chandra did not heed his warnings, Prajapati cursed him and made him lose his luster.

Without moonlight, the world became dark; so all the gods requested Prajapati to retract his curse. Daksha suggested that Chandra pray to Lord Shiva, which is why the Lord is referred to as *Somnath* or Someshwar, Lord of the Moon. It is said that Chandra also bathed in the Saraswati river to regain his luster, which is the reason for the waxing and waning of the moon and the tides in this seashore location.

## Interesting facts about Somnath Jyotirlinga:

- A chapter in the *Skanda Purana, Prabhasa Khanda* mentions this temple. It is also mentioned in the *Rig Veda* and the *Bhagavat*.

- The temple is built in such a location that there is no land in a straight line to its south till the Antarctica. This is inscribed on one of the pillars - since 7 AD. This makes it a sea-protected site.
- It is believed that the Shivalinga was hidden within the hollowness of the Syamantak Mani or the philosopher's stone (associated with Lord Krishna) - a stone with alchemic properties – able to produce gold. This stone was also believed to have magnetic properties which enabled the Shivalinga to remain suspended in mid-air!

While you can visit this pilgrimage center all through the year, winter (October to March) would be the ideal time to visit it. Visiting it during Mahashivratri (11th March this year) would be the ultimate treat for any devotee!

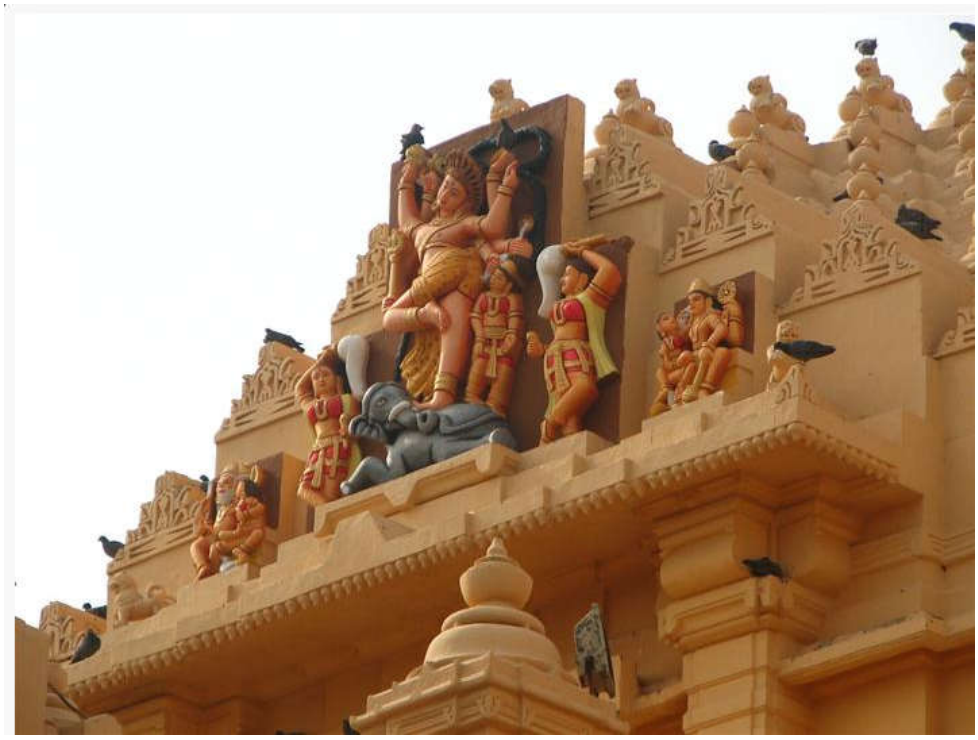
**Photos:**

**Somanath temple in 1957:**

**Somanath temple in 2012:**

**Somanath temple at dawn:**

**Sideview of temple:**



**Links to videos:**

**Live Darshan:**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ni3q4vB9FYQ

**Live Darshan:**

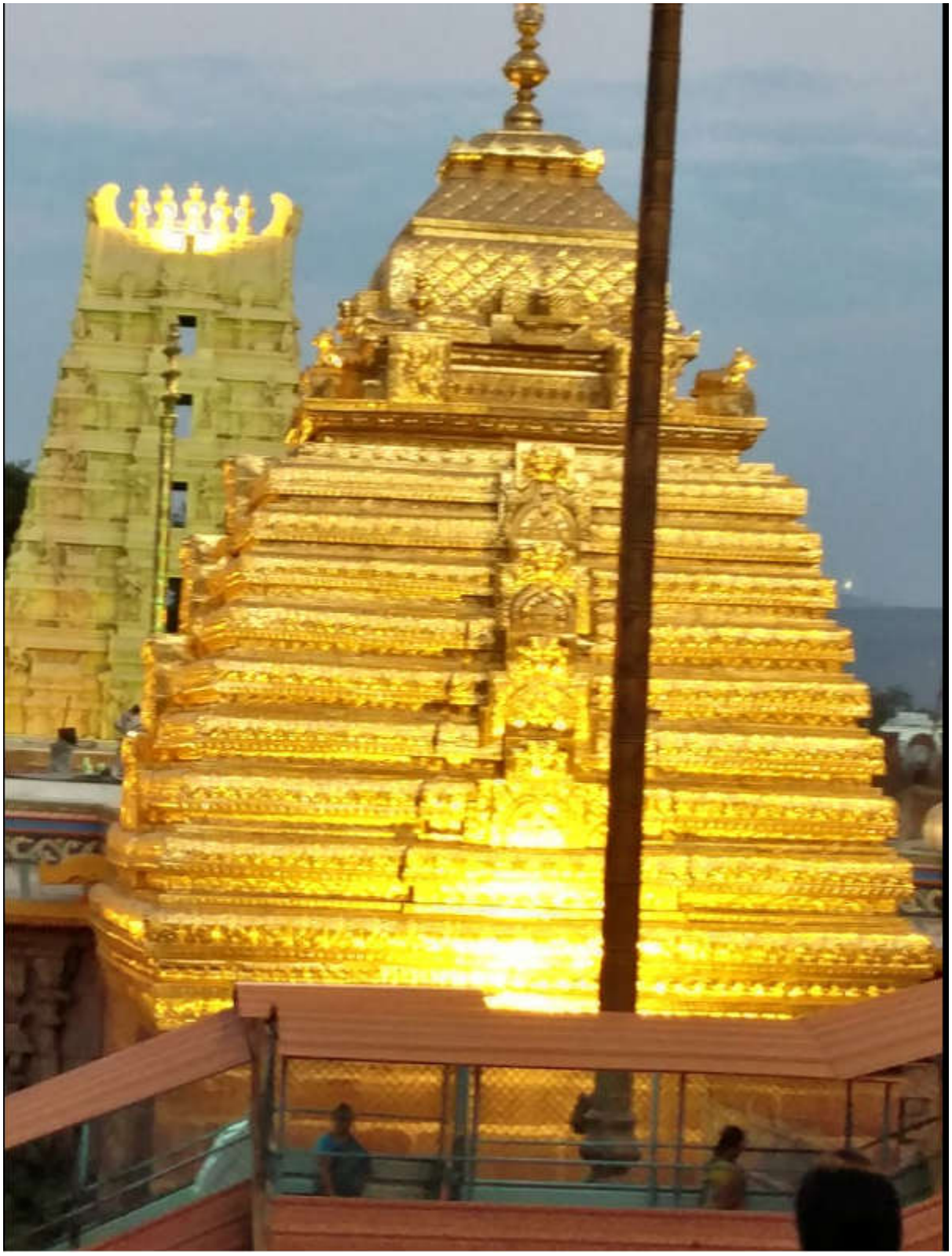
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=srH4o2fYfc0

**Somnath Arti:**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LT5a3ooWBdA

## 2. Sri Mallikarjuna Temple, Srisailam

**From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia**



**Mallikarjuna Temple** (also simply known as **Srisailam Temple**), is a Hindu temple dedicated to the deity Shiva, located at Srisailam in Indian state of Andhra Pradesh.

**Temple entrance**

It is significant to the Hindu sects of both Shaivam as this temple is referred to as one of the twelve Jyothirlingas of Lord Shiva. Shiva is worshiped as Mallikarjuna, and is represented by the *lingam*.

**Legend:**

When Shiva and Parvati decided to find suitable brides for their sons.Shiva got Buddhi (intellect), Siddhi (spiritual power), and Riddhi (prosperity) married to Ganesha. Kartikeya on his return was enraged and went away to stay alone on Mount Kraunja in the name of *Kumarabrahmachari*. On seeing his father coming over to pacify him, he tried to move to another place, but on the request of the Devas, stayed close by. The place where Shiva and Parvati stayed came to be known as Shrishailam.[1]

As per Hindu legend, the presiding deity in the form of Linga (an iconic form of Shiva) was worshipped with jasmine (locally called *Mallika*), leading to the name of presiding deity as Mallikarjuna.[2]

Mahashivratri is the main festival celebrated at Srisailam Mallikarjuna Swamy temple.

**History:**

There are inscriptional evidence from the Satavahana dynasty which place the temple to be existent from the 2nd century. Most modern additions were done during the time of king Harihara I of Vijayanagara Empire.[2] The veerasheromandapam and paathalaganga steps was constructed during the time of Reddi Kingdom.

Architecture:

The temple complex covers 2 hectares and houses four gateway towers known as *gopurams*. The temple has numerous shrines, with those of Mallikarjuna and Bhramaramba being the most prominent. The temple complex houses many halls; the most notable is the Mukha Mandapa built during the Vijayanagar period. The temple is situated facing East. The center mandapam has several pillars, with a huge idol of Nadikeshwara. The temple is enclosed by tall walls measuring 183 m (600 ft) by 152 m (499 ft) and 8.5 m (28 ft) tall. There are a number of sculptures in the precinct each rising above another. The Mukamandapa, the hall leading to the sanctum, has intricately sculpted pillars. The shrine where Mallikarjuna is housed is considered the oldest in the temple, dating back to the 7th century. There is a Sahasra linga (1000 linga), believed to have been commissioned by Rama and five other lingams believed to have been commissioned by Pandavas. A mirror hall in the first precinct has images of Nataraja.[2]

**Religious significance:**

Lord Shiva in this temple is referred to as one of the twelve Jyotirlingas. This temple is classified as one of the Paadal Petra Sthalam.

On the way to the main temple is located Shikreshwar temple.It is said that by having darshan in the temple one does not get rebirth.

Krishna River here is called Patal Ganga. One has to go down 852 stairs to reach the river. The Shiva Linga is bathed with the water of this river.

Ref: https://www.artofliving.org/mahashivratri/mallikarjuna-jyotirlinga

One of the 12 *jyotirlingas*, **Mallikarjuna Jyotirlinga** is in Mallikarjuna Swamy Temple and is dedicated to both Lord Shiva and his consort Goddess Parvati.

### Where is the Mallikarjuna Jyotirlinga located?

The second jyotirlinga is in Sri Bhramaramba Mallikarjuna Temple or Srisailam Temple in Andhra Pradesh. This temple is situated on a hilltop by the Krishna river.

### History of Mallikarjuna Jyotirlinga:

Several rulers contributed to the building and maintenance of the Mallikarjuna Swamy temple. However, the first records appear in 1 AD in the books of the Shathavahanas empire builders.

Subsequently, Ikshvakus, Pallavas, Chalukyas, and Reddis, who were also followers of the Mallikarjuna Swami contributed to the temple. The Vijayanagara Empire and Chhatrapati Shivaji also improved the shrine and temple (building the *gopuram* in 1667 AD) respectively.

Worship was halted here during the Mughal era but resumed during the British rule. However, it was only after independence that this temple came back into prominence.

### What is the story behind Mallikarjuna Jyotirlinga?

Lord Shiva and his consort Goddess Parvati could not make up their minds as to which of their sons, Ganesha or Kartikeya should get married first. To determine who would be first, they set a contest for the two: whoever would go around the world first would be the winner.

Lord Kartikeya immediately set off on his mount, the peacock. Lord Ganesha, on the other hand, went around his parents claiming that they were the world to him. It is said that going around one's parents is equivalent to going around the world. So, he outwitted his brother and won the race. The pleased parents married their son off to Siddhi (spiritual powers) and Riddhi (prosperity). In some legends, Buddhi (intellect) is also believed to be his wife.

When Lord Kartikeya heard about this on his return, he was upset and decided that he would remain unmarried. (However, in some Tamil legends he is said to have two wives.) He left for Mount Krounch and started living there. His parents visited him there and hence there is a shrine for both there – a linga for Shiva and a *Shakti Peetha* for Parvati.

### Interesting facts about Mallikarjuna Jyotirlinga:

- Mallikarjuna Jyotirlinga is special in that it is both a jyotirlinga and a Shakti Peetha (special shrine to Shakti Devi - there are 18 of them) – there are only three such temples in India.
- It is believed that Lord Shiva appeared as Arjuna on Amavasya (No moon day) and Goddess Parvati as Mallika on Poornima (full moon day), and hence the name Mallikarjuna.
- The temple is a work of architecture with its tall towers and beautiful carvings. It is also enclosed within tall walls that fortify it.
- Devotees believe that visiting this temple brings them wealth and fame.
- It is believed that Goddess Parvati fought the demon Mahishasura by transforming herself into a bee. Devotees believe they can still hear a bee buzzing through a hole in the Bhramaramba temple!

## Photos:

Sri Mallikarjuna Swamy Temple ...

Sri Mallikarjuna Swamy Temple ...

Mallikarjuna Jyotirlinga | Srisailam ...

**Links to videos:**

**Shri Mallikarjuna Jyotirlinga Darshan:**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UQPpHVRYjGQ

**Shivarathri celebrations:**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SZnF1cebx_I

**Shivarathri celebrations:**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lw_vuYI1cd8

**Shivarathri celebrations:**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=794h_ghvVRU

**Srisailam temple history:**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N4XOkkFtD_s

## 3. Mahakaleshwar Jyotirlinga temple

**Ref: Wikipedia**

**Mahakaleshwar Jyotirlinga** is a Hindu temple dedicated to Lord Shiva and is one of the twelve Jyotirlingams, shrines which are said to be the most sacred abodes of Lord Shiva. It is located in the ancient city of Ujjain in the state of Madhya Pradesh, India. The temple is situated on the side of the holy river *KShipra*. The presiding deity, Lord Shiva in the lingam form is believed to be *Swayambhu*, deriving currents of power (Shakti) from within itself as against the other images and lingams that are ritually established and invested with mantra-shakti.

**The Temple:**

The idol of Mahakaleshwar is known to be *dakshinamukhi*, which means that it is facing the south. This is a unique feature, upheld by the *tantric shivnetra* tradition to be found only in Mahakaleshwar among the 12 Jyotirlingas. The idol of *Omkareshwar Mahadev* is consecrated in the sanctum above the Mahakal shrine. The images of Ganesh, Parvati and Karttikeya are installed in the west, north, and east of the sanctum sanctorum. To the south is the image of Nandi, the vehicle of Lord Shiva. The idol of Nagchandreshwar on the third storey is open for *darshan* only on the day of Nag Panchami. The temple has five levels, one of which is underground. The temple itself is located in a spacious courtyard surrounded by massive walls near a lake. The *shikhar* or the spire is adorned with sculptural finery. Brass lamps light the way to the underground sanctum. It is believed that *prasada* (holy offering) offered here to the deity can be re-offered unlike all other shrines.[8]

The presiding deity of time, Shiva, in all his splendor, reigns eternally in the city of Ujjain. The temple of Mahakaleshwar, its *shikhar* soaring into the sky, an imposing façade against the skyline, evokes primordial awe and reverence with its majesty. The **Mahakal** dominates the life of the city and its people, even in the midst of the busy routine of modern preoccupations, and provides an unbreakable link with ancient Hindu traditions.

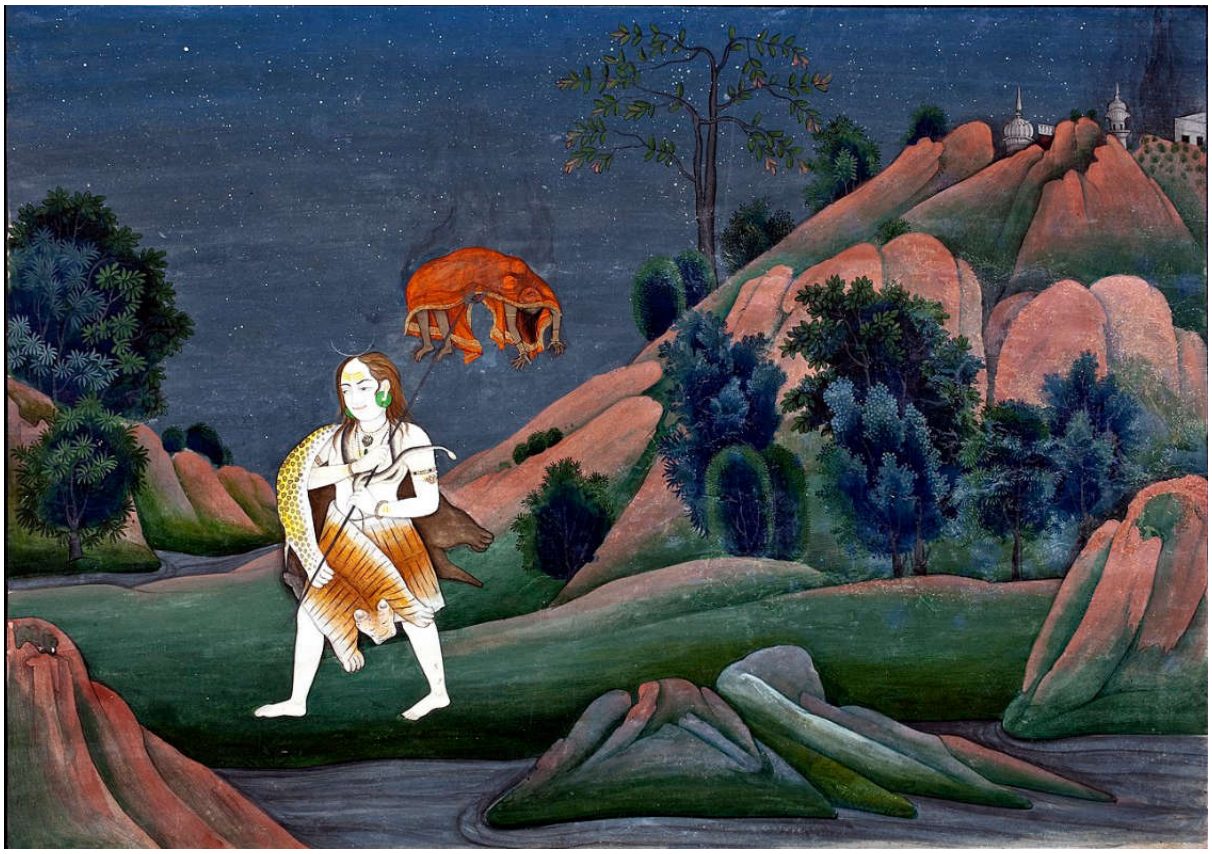
On the day of Maha Shivaratri, a huge fair is held near the temple, and worship goes on through the night.[9]

Devotees are not allowed to bring bags , mobile phones and cameras during the visit . Lockers and Cloak Rooms are there for devotees where they can keep their belongings.

Also an awesome spectacle, with huge participation of devotees, is the procession of God Mahakaal in his Palanquin, called *Shahi Savaari*, to the river Kshipra, on last Monday of the holy period of *Sawaan* during the months of Shraavana or Bhadrapada[10]

**This temple is a Shakti peeth:**

The shrine is revered as one of the 18 Maha Shakti Peetham.[12][13][14]



**Shiva carrying the corpse of Sati Devi**

Shakti Peethas are shrines that are believed to have enshrined with the presence of Shakti due to the falling of body parts of the corpse of Sati Devi, when Lord Shiva carried it. Each of the 51 *Shakti Peethas* has shrines for Shakti and Kalabhairava. The Upper Lip of Sati Devi is said to have fallen here and the Shakti is called as Mahakali.

**References in Hindu scriptures:**

According to the Puranas, the city of Ujjain was called Avantika and was famous for its beauty and its status as a devotional epicenter. It was also one of the primary cities where students went to study holy scriptures. According to legend, there was a ruler of Ujjain called Chandrasena, who was a pious devotee of Lord Shiva and worshiped him all the time. One day, a farmer's boy named Shrikhar was walking on the grounds of the palace and heard the King chant the Lord's name and rushed to the temple to start praying with him. However, the guards

removed him by force and sent him to the outskirts of the city near the river Kshipra. Rivals of Ujjain, primarily King Ripudamana and King Singhaditya of the neighboring kingdoms decided to attack the Kingdom and take over its treasures around this time. Hearing this, Shrikhar started to pray and the news spread to a priest named Vridhi. He was shocked to hear this and upon the urgent pleas of his sons, started to pray to Lord Shiva at the river Kshipra. The Kings chose to attack and were successful; with the help of the powerful demon Dushan, who was blessed by Lord Brahma to be invisible, they plundered the city and attacked all the devotees of Lord Shiva.

Upon hearing the pleas of His helpless devotees, Lord Shiva appeared in his Mahakala form and destroyed the enemies of King Chandrasena. Upon the request of his devotees Shrikhar and Vridhi, Lord Shiva agreed to reside in the city and become the chief deity of the Kingdom and take care of it against its enemies and to protect all His devotees. From that day on, Lord Shiva resided in His light form as Mahakala in a Lingam that was formed on its own from the powers of the Lord and His consort, Parvati. The Lord also blessed his devotees and declared that people who worshipped Him in this form would be free from the fear of death and diseases. Also, they would be granted worldly treasures and be under the protection of the Lord himself.

Bharthari was the elder son of King Gandharva-Sena, and received the kingdom of Ujjain from the celestial god Indra and the King of Dhara.

When Bharthari was king of 'Ujjayani' (modern-day Ujjain) in his state there lived a Brahman who after years of austerities was given the fruit of immortality from the celestial tree of Kalpavriksha. The Brahman presented the same to his monarch, Raja Bharthari, who in turn, passed it on to his love, the beautiful, Pinglah Rani or Ananga Sena Raja Bhartrhari's last and youngest wife. The queen, being in love with the Head police officer of the state, Mahipaala, presented the fruit to him, who further passed it on to his beloved, Lakha, one of the maids of honour. Eventually, Lakha being in love with the king presented the fruit back to the king. Having completed the circle, the fruit revealed the downsides of infidelity to the king, he summoned the queen and ordered her beheading, and

ate the fruit himself. After that, he abdicated the throne, and became a religious mendicant.

He later became a disciple of Pattinatthar who first indulged in an argument about *samsari* and *sanyasi* with king Bhartrhari. Later during the conversation *pattinathar* said that all women have 'dual mind' and it might be the true case even with Parameswari. King conveyed this news to Rani Pingalah and she ordered Pattinathar to get punished and to sit in *kalu maram* (tree, whose top portion would be sharpened like a pencil and whole tree is fully coated with oil, a person who is punished to sit in the top will be split into 2 pieces), they tried to kill Pattinathar, but Kalu Maram started burning and nothing happened to Pattinathar, the king came to know this news and went directly to Pattinathar and asked him to get ready to die the next day, but Pattinathar replied, " I'm ready right now, to die". The next day king came with tears in his eyes and released saint from jail because he actually noticed Queen Pingalah in love with horsemen that night, He threw away his empire, wealth, even full coat dress and dressed in a simple *kovanam* (loincloth), the king became a disciple of Pattinatthar and got *mukthi* (salvation) in Kalahasthi temple.[15]

Kalidasa (c. 2nd–1st century BCE), the great Sanskrit poet of the times who was probably a contemporary of king Pushyamitra Sunga, has mentioned about the rituals of the temple in his works in *Meghadūta*. He mentions about the *nada-aradhana*, the performance of art and dance during the evening rituals.[16]

**History:**

The temple complex was destroyed by Sultan Shams-ud-din Iltutmish during his raid of Ujjain in 1234-5.[17][18][19] The Jyotirlingam was dismantled and believed to be thrown into a nearby 'Kotiteerth Kunda' (a pond neighboring the temple) with the Jaladhari (a structure supporting the Lingam) stolen during the invasion.[20]

The present structure was built by the Maratha general Ranoji Shinde in 1734 CE. Further developments and management was done by other members of his dynasty, including Mahadji Shinde (1730–12 February 1794) and Daulat Rao Shinde's wife Baiza Bai. (1827–1863). During the reign of Jayajirao Shinde (until

1886), major programs of the then Gwalior State used to be held at this temple.[citation needed]

Maratha regime was established in Ujjain in the fourth decade of Eighteenth c. The administration of Ujjain was assigned by Peshwa Bajirao-I to his faithful commander Ranoji Shinde, The Diwan of Ranoji was Sukhatanakar Ramchandra Baba Shenavi who was very wealthy he decided to invest his wealth for religious purposes. In this connection, he re-built the famous Mahakala temple in Ujjain during the 4th-5th decades of Eighteenth c. AD.

After Independence the Dev Sthan Trust was replaced by the municipal corporation of Ujjain. Nowadays it is under the collectorate office of Ujjain district.

Ref: https://www.artofliving.org/mahashivratri/mahakaleshwar-jyotirlinga

Of the 12 *jyotirlingas* in India, the **Mahakaleshwar Jyotirlinga** is believed to be *swayambhu* i.e. originated on its own. Since *kaal* means 'time' and 'death', *Mahakal* i.e. Lord Shiva is called the Lord of Time and Death.

### Where is the Mahakaleshwar Jyotirlinga located?

The temple is located in the historical city of Ujjain in Madhya Pradesh, India. It is situated on the banks of the holy river, Shipra.

### Special features of Mahakaleshwar Temple:

The Mahakaleshwar temple has been built in Maratha, Bhumija and Chalukya architectural styles. It has five levels, one of which is underground. There are images of Lord Shiva's consort, Goddess Parvati (to the north), his sons, Ganesha (to the west) and Kartikeya (to the east) and his mount, Nandi (to the south).

On the second floor above the Mahakaleshwar linga is the Omkareshwara linga. Enshrined on the third floor of the temple is an image of Nagchandreshwar – with

Lord Shiva and Parvati seated on a ten-hooded snake and surrounded by other statues.

It has a tall spire *(shikhara)* with intricate and beautiful carvings.

### History of Mahakaleshwar Jyotirlinga:

The mention of this temple in the Puranas, where it is stated that Prajapita Brahma built it, is proof of its ancient existence. The temple is believed to be built in the 6th century AD by Kumarasena, the son of a former king of Ujjain, Chandpradyot.

It was further reconstructed in the 12th century AD under King Udayaditya and King Naravarman. Later, the Maratha commander Ranoji Shinde under Peshwa Bajirao-I renovated this temple in the 18th century AD.

### What is the story behind Mahakaleshwar Jyotirlinga?

Like all old structures and the stories that surround them, the legend behind Mahakaleshwar Jyotirlinga has many versions. One of them goes like this.

It is believed that King Chandrasena of Ujjain was a great devotee of Lord Shiva. While he was praying, a young boy, Shrikhar wished to pray along with him. However, he was not allowed to do so and was sent away to the outskirts of the city. There, he overheard a plot to attack Ujjain by enemy kings Ripudamana and Singhaditya with the help of a demon named Dushanan.

He began to pray to Lord Shiva to protect the city. Vridhi, a priest heard his prayers and also prayed to the Lord to save the city. In the meanwhile, the rival kings attacked Ujjain. They were almost successful in conquering the city when Lord Shiva came in his Mahakal form and saved them. From that day on, at the behest of his devotees, Lord Shiva lives on in this famous Ujjain temple in the form of a linga.

### Interesting facts about Mahakaleshwar Jyotirlinga:

- Since it is a self-originated linga, it derives power on its own. It does not require mantra *shakti* for power like the other lingas and *moorthies* (statues).
- **It is the only *jyotirlinga* that faces south – *dakshinamukhi*.** All the other jyotirlingas face east. This is because the direction of death is believed to be south. As Lord Shiva faces south, it symbolizes that he is master of death. In fact, people worship Mahakaleshwar to prevent untimely death – to enjoy a long life.
- Nagchadreshwar is opened to the public only one day in the year – on Nag Panchami day. It remains shut on all the other days.
- *Bhasma aarti* (offering with ashes) is a famous ritual here. As ash is pure, non-dual, imperishable and unchangeable, so is the Lord.

Photos:

Mahakaleshwar Jyotirlinga, Ujjain ...

Priests perform Bhasma Aa...

**Links to Videos:**

**Ujjain Mahakaleshwar Darshan:**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zVNfhDpSDPA

**Mahashivarathri:**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sjqym0TzzNQ

**Bhasma Arti:**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_gi3eOPhVOA

**Bhasma Arti:**

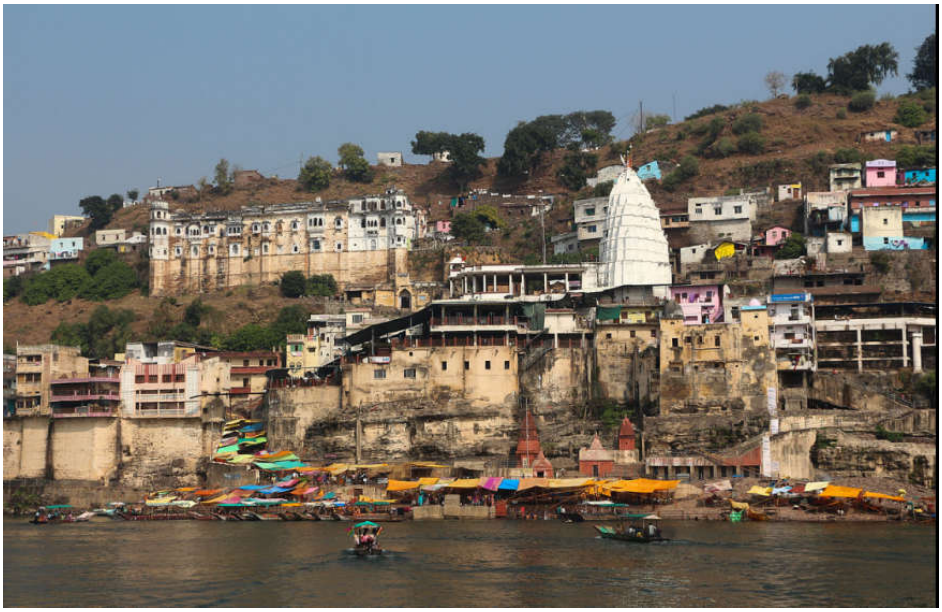
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2oZxZ2MEybM

**Maha Shivarathri Arti:**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G19CZh-ePEg

## 4. Omkareshwar Jyotirlinga Temple

**Omkareshwar Mahadev Temple, Omkareshwar, India:**



**From: Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia**

**Omkareshwar** (IAST: *Ōṃkārēśvar*) is a Hindu temple dedicated to God Shiva. It is one of the 12 revered Jyotirlinga shrines of Shiva. It is on an island called Mandhata or Shivpuri in the Narmada river at Khandwa district in Madhya Pradesh, India; the shape of the island is said to be like the Devanagari ॐ symbol.

There are two main temples of Lord Shiva here, one to Omkareshwar (whose name means "Lord of *Omkara* or the Lord of the *Om* sound") located in the island and one to Mamleshwar (whose name means "Immortal Lord" or "lord of the Immortals or Devas") located on the south bank of Narmada River on the mainland.

### Legends and history:

As per Hindu legend, Vindya, the deity controlling the Vindyachal mountain range was worshipping Shiva to propitiate himself from the sins committed. He created a sacred geometrical diagram and a Lingam made of sand and clay. Shiva was pleased with the worship and believed to have appeared in two forms, namely

Omkareshwar and Amaleswara. Since the mud mound appeared in the form of Om, the island came to be known as Omkareswar. There is a shrine for Parvati and Ganapati in the temple.[8]

The second story relates to Mandhata and his son's penance. King Mandhata of Ikshvaku clan (an ancestor of Lord Ram) worshipped Lord Shiva here until the Lord manifested himself as a Jyotirlinga. Some scholars also narrate the story about Mandhata's sons-Ambarish and Muchukunda, who had practiced severe penance and austerities here and pleased Lord Shiva. Because of this, the mountain is named Mandhata.

The third story from Hindu scriptures says that once upon a time there was a great war between Devas (gods) and Danavas (demons), in which Danavas won. This was a major setback for Devas and hence Devas prayed to Lord Shiva. Pleased with their prayer, Lord Shiva emerged in the form of Omkareshwar Jyotirlinga and defeated Danavas.

Philosophy of Omkaar - Advait Matt says *Omkaar* is composed of two words, *Om* (sound) and *Akaar* (srishti). Both are one not two since Advait means "not two". Om *beez mantra* of *Srishti*, itself is creator of *Srishti*.

Adi Shankara's Cave – Omkareshwar is said to be the place where Adi Sankara met his guru Govinda Bhagavatpada in a cave. This cave can be found even today just below the Shiva temple where an image of Adi Shankara has been installed.

**Location:**

It is situated in the Khandwa district of Madhya Pradesh state in India. It is about 12 km from Mortakka in Madhya Pradesh. Omkareshwar is formed by the sacred river Narmada. This is one of the most sacred rivers in India and is now home to one of the world's biggest dam projects. The temple is situated on Mandatha island on the banks of Narmada and river Kaveri (a tributary of Narmada). The island is 2.6 $km^2$ (2,600,000 $m^2$) in area and can be approached by boats and bridge.

Ref: https://www.artofliving.org/mahashivratri/omkareshwar-jyotirlinga

Of the 12 *jyotirlingas*, Omkareshwar Jyotirlinga is believed to house a *jyotirlinga* that is split between two temples – Omkareshwar and Amareshwar. *Omkareshwar* means 'Lord of Omkara or the Om sound' and *Amareshwar* means 'Lord of the Immortal'.

## Where is the Omkareshwar Jyotirlinga located?

It is located on an island called Mandhata or Shivapuri on the Narmada River in the Khandwa district in Madhya Pradesh.

## Special features of Omkareshwar Temple:

The temple has a large prayer hall with about 60 huge and elaborately carved stone pillars supporting it. It is a five storied structure with each floor having a different deity. Above the Omkareshwar linga is the Mahakaleshwar temple. Sidhnath, Gupteshwar and Dhwajeshwar temples are on the third, fourth and fifth floors respectively.

The temple also boasts of several lofty spires.

## History of Omkareshwar Jyotirlinga:

The Puranas mention this sacred spot as an inhabited and spiritual place.

The aboriginal Bhil chieftains ruled Omkareshwar under the rule of the Parmar rulers of Malwa; this was from 10-13th AD and then by Chauhan Rajputs. The

Marathas took over in the 18th century AD when many temples were built and renovated.

### What is the story behind Omkareshwar Jyotirlinga?

**One legend** says that two sons of emperor Mandhata of the Ikshvaku dynasty performed severe austerities and pleased Lord Shiva because of which the mountain is called Mandhata Mountain. And Lord Shiva manifested himself as a *jyotirlinga.*

**Another legend** says that Vindhya Parvat prayed to Lord Shiva performing severe penance to make the Vindhyas, His abode. Some say it was to become taller than Mount Meru. Lord Shiva was pleased with the penance and granted his wish by appearing as a *jyotirlinga* there.

At the behest of the gods and sages, Lord Shiva split the linga into two parts – one is at Omkareshwar and the other at Amareshwar or Mamleshwar. Therefore, devotees visit both these temples when they visit Mandhata.

It is said that Lord Shiva also allowed the Vindhyas to grow but only as long as he did not trouble the pilgrims. However, over time, Vindhya Parvat's massiveness did cause problems for the devotees and so they sought sage Agastya's help. The sage ordered the mountain to stop growing until he returned to it, which he never did, and hence he solved the devotees' problem.

### Interesting facts about Omkareshwar Jyotirlinga:

- There are two Shiva temples situated near each other, both of which are famous pilgrimage spots for devotees – Amareshwar Jyotirlinga on the mainland and Omkareshwar on an island.
- It is said that Mandhata Island, on which Omkareshwar Jyotirlinga is situated, is in the shape of the sacred Om (ॐ) symbol.
- There are shrines to Panchamukhi Ganesha, and Annapoorani housed within this temple.

Ref: https://www.mahashivratri.org/omkareshwar-temple-madhya-pradesh.html

## Omkareshwar Temple

Omkareshwar Temple is situated on the mountain Mandhata by the banks of Narmada River in the Malva area in Madhya Pradesh. Omkareshwar Temple is one of the 12 revered Jyotirlinga shrines of Shiva. The temple is closely linked with Mammaleshwar Temple (situated on the south of river Narmada) as both the forms of Shiva have been counted as one.

## Legend behind Omkareshwar Temple

**Shiva Purana describes the greatness** of Omkareshwar and Mammaleshwar. It says, two sons of the sun dynasty Mandhata - Ambarish and Mucchkund practiced severe penance and austerities here and pleased Lord Shiva. They also performed great religious sacrifices in this place because of which the mountain is named Mandhata.

**Another popular legend says** that once upon a time Vidhya Parvat practiced severe penance and worshipped Parthivarchana along with Lord Omkareshwar for nearly six months. As a result Lord Shiva was pleased and blessed him with the desire boon. On the sincere request of all the gods and the sages Lord Shiva made two parts of the lings. One half being Omkareshwara and the other Amaleshwara or Amareshwar.

Some scholar say, King Mandhatha of the Ishvaku clan is believed to have worshipped Shiva here. Besides, Govinda Bhagavatpaada, the Guru of Shankaracharya is believed to have lived in a cave here.

The Omkareshwar is not affixed to the ground but is naturally installed there. There is always water around it. The significance of this linga is that the linga is not situated below the cupola. The idol of Lord Shiva is situated on the top of the temple. The temple can be reached by ferry from the banks of the river. A huge fair is organized here on the day of Kartik Poornima.

## Photos:

## Omkareshwar temple view:

**Mamleshwar temple:**

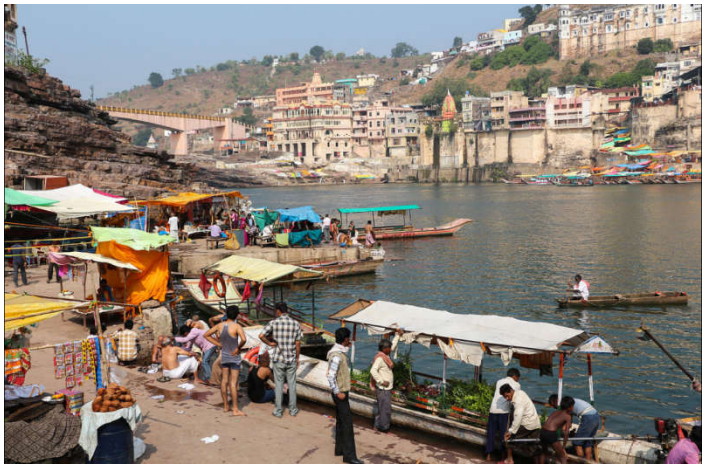
**Mamleshwar temple:**

**Omkareshwar Mahadev Temple, Omkareshwar, India:**

**Mamleshwar Jyotirlinga:**

**View of Narmada:**

**Gomukh ghat:**



Omkareshwar Jyotirling Temple in ...

Shri Mamleshwar Jyotirling, Omkaresh...

Omkareshwar Jyotirlinga temple ...

**Links to Videos:**

**Omkareshwar temple darshan:**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Xa1B7noqiA

**Shivarathri in Omkareshwar temple:**

https://navbharattimes.indiatimes.com/state/madhya-pradesh/khandwa/people-throng-omkareshwar-temple-on-shivratri-gates-to-remain-open-for-36-hours/videoshow/81447675.cms

**History of Omkareshwar temple:**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=urh10U4i9VE

**Omkareshwar Gupt Arti:**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NOZ5r5KYiac

## 5. Baidyanath Jyotirlinga temple

**Ref: Wikipedia:**

Vaidyanatha Jyotirlinga temple, also known as Baba Baidyanath dham and Baidyanath dham is one of the twelve Jyotirlingas, the most sacred abodes of Shiva. It is located in Deoghar in the Santhal Parganas division of the state of Jharkhand, India. It is a temple complex consisting of the main temple of Baba Baidyanath, where the Jyotirlinga is installed, and 21 other temples.[1]

According to Hindu beliefs, the demon king Ravana worshipped Shiva at the current site of the temple to get the boons that he later used to wreak havoc in the world. Ravana offered his ten heads one after another to Shiva as a sacrifice. Pleased with this, Shiva descended to cure Ravana who was injured. As he acted as a doctor, he is referred to as Vaidhya ("doctor"). From this aspect of Shiva, the temple derives its name.

Kanwar Yatra is an annual pilgrimage of devotees of Shiva, known as Kānvariasor "Bhole" to Hindu pilgrimage places of Sultanganj in Bihar to fetch holy waters of Ganges River. Millions of participants gather sacred water from the Ganga and carry it across hundreds of miles to dispense as offerings in Baidyanath Temple in Jharkhand.

**Location of Baidyanatha temple:**

Baidyanatham Chithabhoomau (1/21-24)[2] and Sivmahapuran Satarudra Samhita (42/1-4)[3] is the ancient verse that identifies location of Vaidyanth Jyotirlinga. According to which Baidyantham is in 'Chidabhoomi', which is the ancient name of Deoghar. In Dwadasa jyothirlinga sthothram, Adi Sankaracharya has praised Vaidyanath jyothirlinga in following verses,[4][5]

Poorvothare prajwalika nidhane

sada vasantham girija sametham

surasuraradhitha padapadmam

srivaidyanatham thamaham namami

This states that Vaidyanath jyotirlinga is located at Prajwalika nidhanam (meaning funeral place i.e., chithabhoomi) in the North-Eastern part of the country. Deoghar is far located in east compared to Parli which is in west-central part of the country. Also Chidabhoomi indicates that, in olden days, this was a funeral place, where corpses are burnt and post-death ceremonies were performed. This place could have been a center of tantric cults like Kapalika/Bhairava where Lord Shiva is worshipped significantly as smasan vasin (meaning, residing in crematorium), sava bhasma bhushita (meaning, smearing body with ashes of burnt bodies).[6]

While, the Dvadasalinga Smaranam has variation by which, verse is Paralyam Vaidyanatham, i.e., Vaidyanatham is in Parli, Maharashtra. The names and the locations of the 12 Jyotirlingas mentioned are:[7][8][9]

Saurashtre Somanathamcha Srisaile Mallikarjunam|

Ujjayinya Mahakalam Omkaramamaleswaram ||

Paralyam Vaidyanathancha Dakinyam Bheema Shankaram |

Setu Bandhethu Ramesam, Nagesam Darukavane||

Varanasyantu Vishwesam Tryambakam Gautameethate|

Himalayetu Kedaaram, Ghrishnesamcha shivaalaye||

Etani jyotirlingani, Saayam Praatah Patennarah|

Sapta Janma Kritam pApam, Smaranena Vinashyati||

**Thus the three temples claiming their shrines as 'real' jyotirlinga of Vaidyanath are:**

Baidyanath temple at Deoghar, Jharkhand,

Vaidyanath temple at Parli, Maharashtra and

Baijnath temple at Baijnath, Himachal Pradesh.[citation needed]

Bhavishyapurana also describes Baidyanath as follows:

"Narikhande is district abounding in thickets. It lies west of the Dwarikashwari River. It extends along the Panchakuta hills on its west, and approaches Kikta on the north. The forests are very extensive, chiefly of Sakhota, Arjuna and Sal trees with a plentiful addition of brushwood. The district is celebrated for the shrine of Baidyanath. The deity is worshiped by people from all quarters, and is the source of every good in the present age."

It is believed that, Shiva first manifested himself as a Jyotirlinga on the night of the Aridra Nakshatra, thus the special reverence for the Jyotirlinga. The same shrine of Vaidyanath is considered as one of 51 Shakti Peethas, where 'heart' of Sati (goddess) fell, after being broken apart by the Sudarshana Chakra of Lord Vishnu, from the body of Dakshayani (Sati), carried by the lovelorn, distraught Shiva, at the location on which the respective temple is built. Since the heart of Sati fell here, the place is also called as Hardapeetha. Here Sati is worshipped as Jayaa Durga (Victorious Durga) and Lord Bhairava as Vaidyanath or Baidyanath. Dakshayani was reborn as Parvati, daughter of Himaavat, king of the mountains, and his wife, the Devi Mena.[10][11]

**Description of Temple:**

The Maa Parvathi temple is tied up with the main temple, with huge red sacred threads which is unique and worthy of reverence, showing the unity of Shiva and Shakti. According to the stories narrated in the Shiva Purana, the holy Baidyanath temple resembles the unity of souls and thus fits marriage for Hindus.

The nearest railway station is Jasidih railway station, which is 7 km from Vaidyanath temple. Jasidh is 311 km from Howrah/Sealdah on Patna route. On a normal day, the worshipping of Baidyanath Jyotirlingam begins at 4 AM. The temple doors open at this time. During 4:00am to 5:30 am, the Head priest worships with Shodashopachar. Locals also call it Sarkari Pooja. Then the devotees begin their worship of the Shivalinga. The most interesting tradition is that priests of the temple pour kuchcha Jal upon the lingam first, and later on, the pilgrims pour water and offer flowers and Bilva leaf, upon the lingam. The Puja rituals

continue till 3.30 PM. After this, the temple doors are closed. In the evening at 6 PM the doors are opened again for devotees/ pilgrims and the process of worshipping begins again. At this time Shringar Puja takes place. The temple closes at 9:00 pm on a normal day, but during Holy Shravan month, the timings are extended. Unlike Somnath or Rameshwaram or Srisailam, here the devotees can get satisfaction by offering Abhishek themselves on Jyotirlinga. The pandas who perform different poojans for devotees are very important persons. The devotee can also buy Peda as prasad from Babadham. Peda is a local speciality of Deoghar. Babadham has a regular and well-maintained office to accept offerings and donations.

The Matsyapuran narrates the place as Arogya Baidyanathitee, the holy place where Shakti lives and assists Shiva in freeing people from incurable diseases. This whole area of Deoghar was under the rule of the Kings of Gidhaur who were much attached with this temple. Raja Bir Vikram Singh founded this princely state in 1266. In 1757 after the Battle of Plassey the officers of the East India Company paid their attention to this temple. An English man, Keating was sent to look at the administration of the temple. Mr. Keating, the first English collector of Birbhum, took interest in the administration of the temple. In 1788, under Mr. Keating's order Mr. Hesilrigg, his assistant, who was probably the first English man to visit the holy city, set out to supervise personally the collection of the pilgrim offerings and dues. Later, when Mr. Keating himself visited Babadham, he was convinced and forced to abandon his policy of direct interference. He handed over the full control of the temple to the hands of the high priest.[19][20]

**Shravan Mela and yatra:**

Millions of pilgrims visit this shrine every year. It is famous for the mela of Shraavana (a month of the Hindu calendar), between July and August. About 8 to 10 million devotees visit the place from various parts of India and offer holy water of Ganges to the deity collected from Sultanganj, which is almost 108 km from Deoghar and Baidyanath.[21] The water is also brought by the *Kānvarias*, who carry the water in *Kavadi*, and walk all the distance, on barefoot. You will find large crowds walking all the way carrying water. An unbroken line of people in saffron-dyed clothes stretches over the full 108 km for the month. The pilgrims

are called *Dak Bam* and they do not stop even once in their journey from Sultangunj, located at Bhagalpur district to Vaidyanath. Pilgrims to the temple later visit the Basukinath temple.[22][23]

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Ref: https://www.artofliving.org/mahashivratri/vaidyanath-jyotirlinga

### Where is the Baidyanath Jyotirlinga located?

This temple is located in Deoghar, Jharkhand. *Deoghar* means 'home of Gods'.

### History of Baidyanath Jyotirlinga:

Baidyanath Dham has been famous since the rule of the last Gupta emperor, Adityasena Gupta in the 8th century AD. Mughal emperor Akbar's brother-in-law built a pond at Deoghar known as Mansarovar. This temple appears to have maintained its importance even during the Muslim rule in India.

### Special features of Baidyanath Temple:

Along with the main temple of Baba Baidyanath, there are also 21 other temples. Some of the shrines you will find here are for Parvati, Ganesha, Brahma, Kalabhairav, Hanuman, Saraswati, Surya, Ram-Lakshman-Janaki, Ganga, Kali, Annapurna, and Lakshmi-Narayan. The Maa Parvati temple is tied to the Shiva temple with red sacred threads.

The main temple has a pyramidal tower with three gold vessels set compactly. These were gifted by the Maharaja of Giddhaur, Raja Puran Singh. There are also five knives in a trident shape (*Punchsula*) as well as a lotus jewel with eight petals called Chandrakanta Mani.

There is a huge Nandi, Lord Shiva's mount, in front of the Lord.

### What is the story behind Baidyanath Jyotirlinga?

It is said that demon king Ravana prayed to Lord Shiva seeking boons that would make him omnipotent. As a sacrifice, he offered each of his ten heads one after

another. This pleased Lord Shiva, who came down to earth and cured the injured Ravana. The act of curing made Lord Shiva equivalent to a doctor or *vaidhya/baidhya.* Hence, the name *Baidyanath*.

**Another version** says that Ravana, one of the greatest devotees of Lord Shiva, requested him to make Lanka his home. The Lord could not acquiesce to that but said that the Shiva Linga would be as good as his presence. He placed the condition that while transporting the linga, Ravana must not put it down anywhere. If he did, the place where he put it down would be the site of the linga. As Ravana was transporting it to Lanka, the gods feared the consequences of the linga at Ravana's kingdom and requested Lord Varuna, lord of the waters, to break his journey. Varuna entered Ravana's stomach, making the demon king want to relieve himself. He descended to the ground and handed the linga to a Brahmin (Lord Vishnu in disguise) and asked him to hold it.

As soon as Ravana went to relieve himself, Lord Vishnu placed the linga on the ground and disappeared. When Ravana returned, he realized that he had been tricked. The linga was fixed to the ground. He tried with all his might to displace it. However, he could not. So, he paid obeisance to it right there. This spot is believed to be Deoghar.

This temple doubles as **a Shakti Peetha** as well. When Lord Shiva's first consort, Sati immolated herself after her father Daksha's *yagna* (sacrifice or offering), the grief-stricken Lord, roamed the world with her body. Lord Vishnu cut it up into 52 parts. It is said that her heart fell at Deoghar – making it a *Shakti Peetha.*

### Interesting facts about Baidyanath Jyotirlinga:

Baidyanath Jyotirlinga is also known as Baidyanath Dham locally.

Given how old the jyotirlingas and associated temples are, there is some variation in beliefs about their locations. Three different sites claim to house the real jyotirlinga - Baidyanath temple at Deoghar, Jharkhand, and Vaijnath temple at Parli, Maharashtra and Bajinath temple in Bajinath, Himachal Pradesh.

Devotees are allowed to do abhishek (anoint the linga with water) themselves on the jyotirlinga.

Shravan Mela takes place here every July-August.

Ref: https://www.thedivineindia.com/baidyanath-jyotirlinga-mandir/5956

## Short information

- **Location:** Deoghar, Shivganga Muhalla, Jharkhand, 814112
- **Temple Open and Close Timing:** Morning: 04:00 AM to 03:30 pm
- Evening: 06:00 pm to 09:00 pm.
- During various religious occasions, the darshan timings are extended.
- **Nearest Railway Station:** Baidyanath Dham Railway Station (BDME) at a distance of nearly 7 kilometres from Baidyanath Temple.
- **Nearest Airport:** Domestic Airport is Lok Nayak Jayaprakash Airport at a distance of nearly 272 kilometres from Baidyanath Temple.
- **District:** Deoghar district
- **Temple board:** Baba Baidyanath Temple Management Board
- **Important festival:** Maha Shivaratri, Sharabani Mela
- **Number of temples:** 22
- **Other Name :** Vaidyanath Jyotirlinga

Vaidyanath Jyotirlinga Temple is a major pilgrimage site of Hindus, the temple is completely dedicated to Lord Shiva. The temple is located in the famous Devgarh place in Jharkhand. Devghar is also called Baidyanath Dham due to being a holy pilgrimage. The Jyoti Ling situated in the Vaidyanath temple is from the 12 Jyoti Linga of Lord Shiva and is considered Vaidyanath as the ninth Jyotirlings. There is the main temple of Baba Baidyanath, where Jyotirlinga is established, and there are 21 other temples.

The Vaidyanath temple is also known as 'Devghar', the place where the temple is located. Due to being located in Baidyanath Jyotirlinga, this place has got Deoghar name. It is said that all the wishes of those who come here are fulfilled. Because of this, this Jyotirling is also called 'Kamna Linga'.

Vaidyanath Jyotirling is also Description in Maha Shivpuran, which identifies the place of Vaidyanath Jyotirling, according to which the Bedenham is in 'Chidhabhoomi', which is the name of Devghar.

There are also three more temples in the main market of Devgarh in the west of Baba Baidyanath Temple Complex. They are known as Baiju Temple. The construction of these temples was done by the descendants of the chief priests of Baba Baithanath temple sometime in the past. Lord Shiva's gender is established in every temple.

**According to the stories described in Shiva Puranas**, King Ravan of Lanka had realized that his capital will not be perfect and independent unless Mahadev always lives in Lanka. He gave constant attention to Mahadev. To make happy to Mahadev, he cut his head one by one and offering it to Shivling as soon as Ravan was cutting his tenth head, Lord Shiva was pleased and allowed him to take mahadev self part to Lanka. Mahadev told Ravana that if this Shiva Linga will be first placed on the earth, then this Linga will be established forever. Ravana was happy and was taking Shivalinga to Lanka.

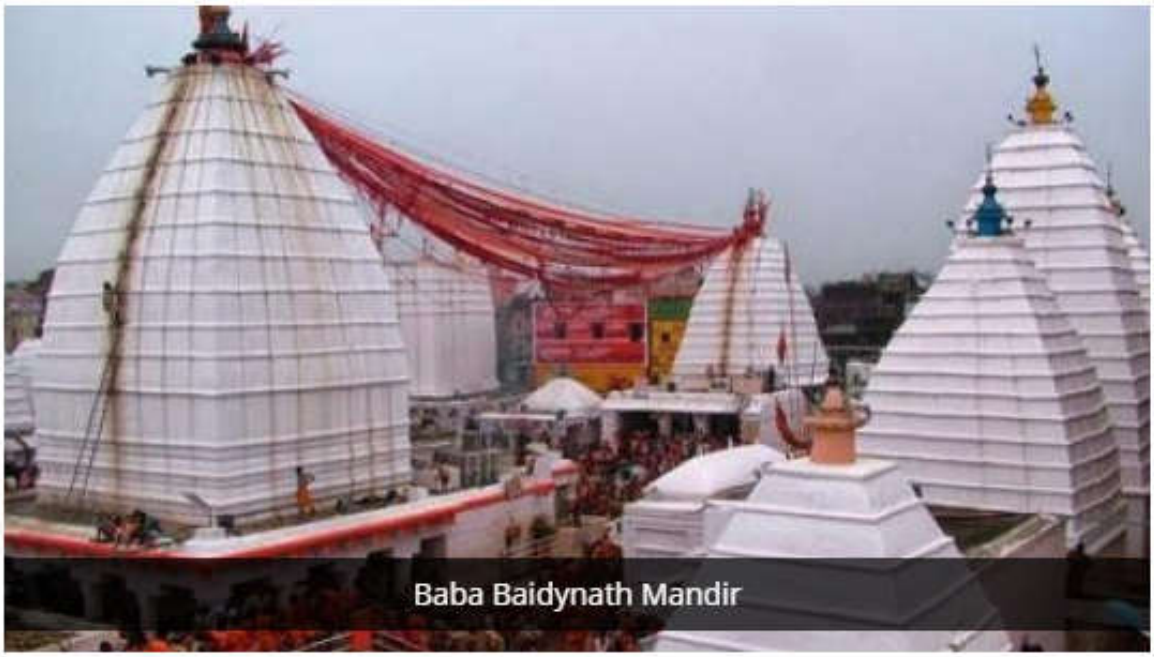
This incident started to worry about other Gods, if Ravana took Shivalinga to Lanka and Ravan would be invincible. So all the gods have requested Varun Deva to inspire them in the body of Ravana and for the Urination. This made Ravan wish to urine. Now Ravana was searching for a man whom he could temporarily hand over to Lingam. Then Lord Ganesha was presented in the form of a Brahman and presented before Ravana. Ravan was unaware of this, Ravana handed the Brahman to Lingam. Brahmans kept Lingam at this place and now it is Baidyanath Dham. Ravan tried to remove the linga from the place where it was kept. But

Ravana could not even move an inch of the penis. Frustrated Ravan, he cast his thumb on Shivaalanga and went to Lanka. Ravan came to this place everyday for the worship of Vaidyanath Jyotirling.

Every year on the Vaidyanath Dham, a fair is celebrated in the month of Shravan (July-August), in which thousands of pilgrims come to visit Baba Bholenath. All these pilgrims undertake tremendous hiking journeys of several kilometers of Saltanganj with water from the holy Ganges. After this, they keep Gangajal in their own kanvar and proceed towards Baidyanath Dham and Basuknath. While taking holy water it is taken care of that the character in which there is water will not touch anywhere on the land. There is also a huge pond near the temple. The main temple of Baba Baidyanath is the oldest, many other temples have been built around it. The temple of Baba Bholenath is associated with the temple of Lord Parvati ji.

Vasukinath is known for Lord Shiva temple. It is believed that the visit of the Vaidyanath temple is considered incomplete till the Vasukinath is not visit. But there is no such description in the Puranas. This temple is situated near the village of Jarmundi, 42 kilometers from Devgarh. Here various forms of local art can be seen. Its history is linked to the Ghatwal of Nonihat. There are many other small temples in the Vasukinath temple premises.

**Photos:**


Baba Baidynath Mandir

## Baba Baidyanath dham:

Baidyanath Jyotirlinga Temple Deogarh ...

Baba Baidyanath Dham Deoghar ...

baba baidyanath dham deoghar mandir ...

Baidyanath Temple In Deoghar

**Video links:**

**Baba lives in Deoghar:**

**https://www.prabhatkhabar.com/video/baba-baidyanath-lives-in-deoghar-special-worship-is-done-in-shivratri-maha-shivratri-2021**

**Deogarh Baidyanath Dham:**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RmwBgxrO7lY

**Shivarathri pooja live:**

https://www.india.com/festivals-events/watch-maha-shivratri-puja-live-from-baba-baidyanath-temple-in-deogarh-jharkhand-4483238/

**Mahashivarathri in Deoghar:**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3LJq-3LhuCk

## 6. Bhimashankar Jyotirlinga Temple

**Bhimashankar Temple, Pune, Maharashtra**

**Ref: Wikipedia**

**Architecture:**

This is a Jyotirlinga shrine located 50 km Khed taluka (alias ), near Pune, in Maharashtra, India. It is located 127 km from Shivajinagar (in Pune) in the Ghat region of the Sahyadri Mountains. Bhīmāshankar is also the source of the river Bhima, which flows southeast and merges with the Krishna river near Raichur. The other Jyotirlinga shrines in Maharashtra are Trimbakeshwar near Nashik and Grishneshwar.

The Bhimashankar temple is a composite of old and new structures in the Nagara style of architecture. It shows the excellency of the skills achieved by ancient Vishwakarma sculptors. It is a modest yet graceful temple and it dates back to the 13th century while the *sabhamandap* was built in the 18th century by Nana Phadnavis. The shikhara was built by Nana Phadnavis. The great Maratha ruler Chattrapati Shivaji Maharaj is said to have made endowments to this temple to facilitate worship services. As with other Shiva temples in this area, the sanctum is at a lower level.

Although the structure here is fairly new, the shrine Bhimashankaram (and the Bhimarathi river) have been referred to in literature dating back to the 13th century CE. Saint Jnaneshwar is said to have visited Tryambakeshwar and Bhimashankar. A unique bell (Roman style) can be seen in front of the temple. This bell has an idol of Mother Mary with Jesus. This large bell was presented by Chimaji Appa (Brother of Bajirao Peshwa I and uncle of Nanasaheb Peshwa). On 16 May 1739, Chimaji Appa collected five large bells after he won a war against the Portuguese from the Vasai Fort. He offered one here at Bhimashankar and the others at Menavali near Wai in front of a Shiva Temple on the banks of the Krishna river, Banshanker temple (Pune), Omkareshwar Temple (Pune) and Ramlinga temple (Shirur).

**Surroundings:**

There are Buddha style carvings of Amba-Ambika, Bhootling, and Bhimashankar in the hills of Manmaad near Bhimashankar at a height of 1034 metres. A big bell in Hemadpanthi structure built by Nana Phadanavis is a feature of Bhimashankar. Places that can be visited in the vicinity include Hanuman Lake, Gupt Bhimashankar, Origin of River Bhima, Nag Phani, Bombay Point, and Sākshi Vinayak. Bhimashankar is a reserved forest area of 130.78 $km^2$ and was declared a wildlife sanctuary in 1985. This sanctuary is a part of the Western Ghats, so it is rich in floral and faunal diversity. A variety of birds, animals, insects and plants can be seen. A rare animal Malabar Giant squirrel locally called as "Shekaru" can be found in the deep woods. The Bhorgiri fort is close to Bhimashankar.

## Other temples and shrines:

There is a shrine known as Kalmaja near the Bhimashankar temple. Kalamaja is a Goddess dedicated to a tree named Kalamb. She is a local tribal Goddess and many stories have been spawned due to the influence of Hinduism on this region.

The *Mokshakund thirtha* is behind the Bhimashankar temple, and it is associated with the rishi Kaushika. There are also the Sarvathīrtha, the Kusharanya thirtha - where the Bhima river begins to flow eastward, and the Jyanakund.

## Worship:

Bhimashankar is an ancient shrine, one of the 12 Jyotirlingas of Shiva. Far away from the tumult of urban life, peeping through the white clouds, Bhimashankar can be termed a pilgrim's paradise. The dense forests surrounding the high ranges are an abode for rare species of flora and fauna. Situated at the extreme end of the Sahyadri Ranges, this place gives a wonderful view of the world around the local rivers and hill stations.

Bhimashankar is the source of the Bhima River, which flows southeast and merges with the Krishna River. With endless stretches of virgin forests, lofty peaks that seem to reach out to the heavens, and the whispering waters of the Bhimā River, Bhimashankar is definitely one of God's choicest creations.

It seems as if Lord Shiva is keeping a silent vigil over the majestic ranges of the Sahyadris. The serenity interrupted only by the silent murmuring of the cool breeze and the occasional chirping of birds, Bhimashankar is a trekker's delight and a traveller's sojourn.

## Transportation:

### From Pune:

If starting from Pune, drive along the Pune-Nasik highway and turn off at the road leading to Bhimashankar. The mountain road is quite a steep climb. The distance is about 120 km from Pune.

Government MSRTC buses (non-luxury) run from Pune to Bhimashankar every 30 minutes from 5:30 am till 4:00 pm. You can get State Transport buses from

Shivajinagar, Pune. The fare is Rs. 155 and it takes around 4-5 hours to reach there from Pune.

**History:**

Although the present structure of the temple appears to be of comparatively recent origin, the shrine Bhimashankaram (and the Bhimarathi river) have been referred to in literature dating back to the 13th century. Built in the Nagara style of architecture, this temple is a modest yet graceful temple and dates back to the 18th century. One can also find borrowed influences from the Indo Aryan style of architecture.

It is believed that the ancient shrine was erected over a Swayambhu Lingam (that is the self emanated Shiva Lingam). It can be observed that the Lingam is exactly at the centre of the floor of the Garbagriham (the Sanctum Sanctorum) of the temple. Intricate carvings of divine beings, interspersed with human figurines adorn the pillars and the doorframes of the temple. Scenes from mythology find themselves captured in these magnificent carvings.

Within the temple precincts, there is also a small shrine dedicated to Lord Shani Mahātma (also called Shanaeshwara). The idol of Nandi, Lord Shiva's vāhan (vehicle) has been installed as is the case with all the Siva Temples, just at the entrance of the temple.

This temple is closely associated with the legend of Shiva slaying the demon Tripurāsura associated with the invincible flying citadels, the "Tripurās". Shiva is said to have taken abode in the 'Bhima Shankara' form, upon the request of the Gods, on the crest of the Sahyadri hills, and the sweat that poured forth from His body after the battle is said to have formed the Bhimarathi river.

The Gopura-shikhara of the temple was built by Nāna Phadnavis. The great Maratha ruler, Shivāji is also said to have made endowments to this temple to facilitate the carrying out, of worship services. As with other Shiva temples in this area, the sanctum is at a lower level. The 'Shani temple' is located inside the main complex of the temple of Bhimashankar.

Between the two pillars outside the 'Shani' temple, one comes across an ancient huge Portuguese bell. Behind the temple, there is a small pathway that leads one to the banks of a river. "Stepping out of the Temple, one is awed with a bewitching view of the virgin wilderness, occasionally interrupted by the glimpses of the majestic forts on the surrounding mountains."

History unveils itself in the peaks of the Sahyadris. Bhimashankar – a place where spiritual splendor merges with nature's magnificence is definitely a pilgrim's paradise. There are other temples and shrines, near the main temple. There is a shrine to Kamalaja near the Bhimashankar temple. Kamalaja is an incarnation of Parvathi, who aided Shiva in his battle against Tripuraasura. Kamalajaa was worshipped with offerings of lotus flowers by Brahma.

There is a shrine for Siva Ganams, Shaakini and Daakini who assisted Shiva in the battle against the demon, Bhima. Kaushika Maha Muni is said to have done 'Tapas' (penance) there. The place where he bathed is called Mokshakund thirtham, which is located behind the Bhimashankar temple. There are also the Sarvathirtha, the Kusharanya thirtha - where the Bhīmā river begins to flow eastward, and the Jnyanakund.

**Ref: https://www.artofliving.org/mahashivratri/bhimashankar-jyotirlinga**

## Where is the Bhimashankar Jyotirlinga located?

It is located in the village of Bhorgiri, about 125 km from Pune, in Maharashtra, India in the Ghat region of the Sahyadri Mountains. It is the place where the Bhima river's source can be found. This river finally merges with the Krishna River.

## History of Bhimashankar Jyotirlinga:

The Bhimashankar temple is a testament to the skills of the Vishwakarma sculptors. It was built around the 13th century. Structures such as the shikhara

(spires) were added by Maratha empire statesman, Nana Phadnavis, in the 18th century.

The Maratha ruler, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, is also believed to have facilitated worship here through his endowments.

## Special features of Bhimashankar Temple:

It is believed that the ancient shrine was built around a swayambhu linga i.e. a linga that originated on its own. The linga is exactly at the center of the floor, in the temple's sanctum. There are intricate carvings of divine and human beings on the pillars, and doorframes of the temple. You can also see scenes from mythology depicted here.

There is also a shrine for Lord Shaneeshwara inside the temple. A statue of Lord Shiva's mount, Nandi, can be found at the entrance of the temple as is common in Shiva temples.

## What is the story behind Bhimashankar Jyotirlinga?

There are different legends associated with the Bhimashankar Jyotirlinga. Here are two of them.

**According to one legend**, a demon called Tripurasura performed penance in the Bhimashankar jungle to please Lord Shiva and ask him for the gift of immortality. Lord Shiva was pleased with his devotion and granted him immortality on the condition that he would use his power to help the local people. Tripurasura agreed with Him. However, over time, he forgot his promise and began to harass both humans and the gods. When the gods begged Lord Shiva to do something to stop the ensuing chaos, the Lord prayed to his consort Goddess Parvati. Both of them appeared as Ardhanari Nateshwara and killed Tripurasura, after which peace prevailed.

**According to another legend**, in the Dakini forests on the ranges of the Sahyadri Mountains lived an asura (demon) named Bhima with his mother Karkati. He was, in fact, the son of Kumbharkarna, the younger brother of King Ravana. When he

learnt that Lord Vishnu had killed his father in his avatar as Rama, he was furious. He vowed revenge and performed severe penance to please Lord Brahma.

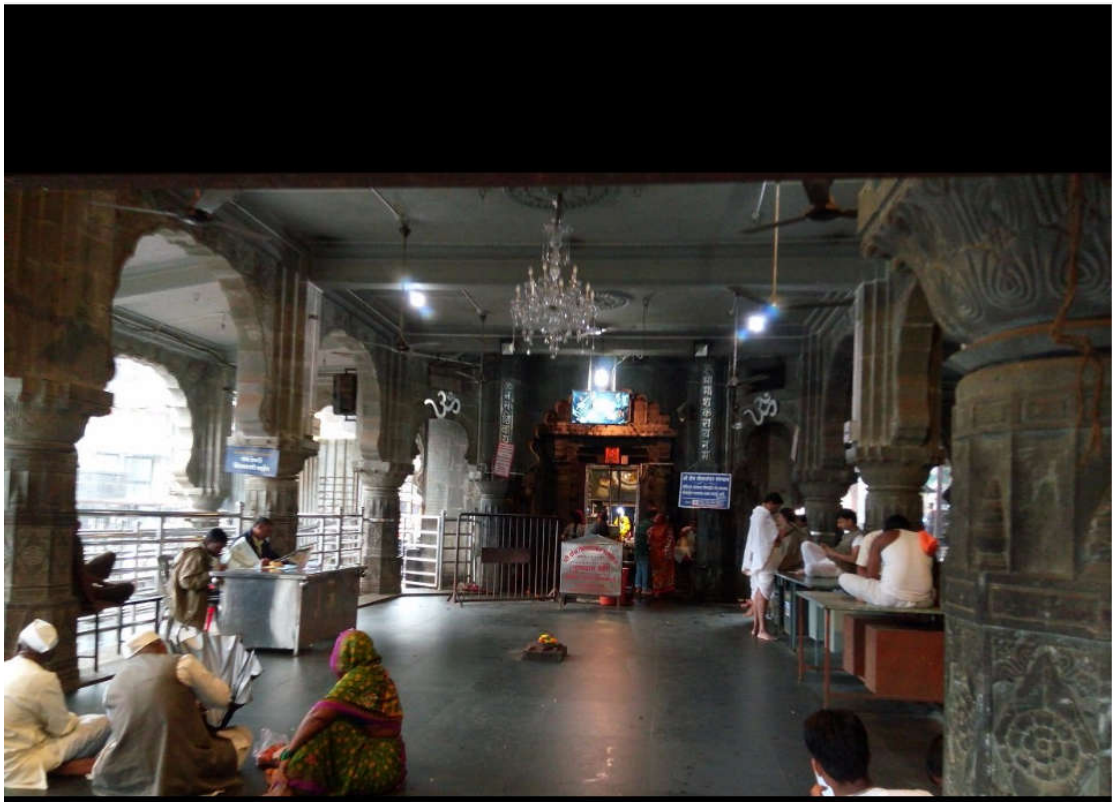
In return, Brahma blessed him with immense strength, which he used to terrorize the world. He imprisoned an ardent devotee of Lord Shiva, Kamrupeshwar and demanded that he pray to him instead of Lord Shiva. When Kamrupeshwar refused to do so, Bhima raised his sword to destroy the Shivalinga. That is when Lord Shiva appeared before him and reduced him to ashes. The place where Lord Shiva manifested himself is the spot the Shivalinga is believed to be now.

### Interesting facts about Bhimashankar Jyotirlinga:

- Bhimashankar has been declared a wildlife sanctuary; it is a reserved forest area, and as it is part of the Western Ghats, it is rich in flora and fauna.
- The state animal of Maharashtra, the Malabar Giant Squirrel, is a rare animal found here.

While Bhimashankar is accessible round the year, at 3,500 feet above sea level, it would be best to visit it post monsoon as it experiences heavy showers in the monsoon period. You can also visit it in the winter months; so August to February is a good time for a visit. It would be ideal to visit this divine destination during Mahashivratri.

**Photos:**



श्री भिमाशंकर ज्योर्तिलिंग सिंहव्दार

**Video links:**

**Bhimashankar Jyotirlinga temple:**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RpIt2WBkyaY

**Secret of Bhimashankar temple:**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OMMeYTGDZq4

**Gupt Shivaling in Bhimashankar:**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u_ZPmOc5-IQ

## 7. Rameshwaram Jyotirlinga temple:

**Ramanatha swamy temple**

Ref: https://www.artofliving.org/mahashivratri/rameshwaram-jyotirlinga

Rameshwaram Jyotirlinga gets its name because Lord Rama worshipped Lord Shiva in this spot.

**Where is the Rameshwaram Jyotirlinga located?**

Ramnath or Rameshwaram or Ramanathaswamy temple is located on the Rameshwaram Island in Tamil Nadu.

**History of Rameshwaram Jyotirlinga:**

The ancient shrine is said to have been housed inside a thatched hut till the 12th century. Parakrama Bahu of Sri Lanka was said to have begun the masonry work here. The rest of the temple was built by the Setupathy rulers of Ramanathapuram.

The current structure of the temple is believed to have been built in the 17th century AD.

Several royal families from Travancore, Ramanathapuram, Mysore and Pudukkottai have patronized the temple and added to its current beauty.

**Special features of Rameshwaram Temple:**

The temple is spread over 15 acres and has tall pyramidal towers (gopurams) and a huge Nandi. There are 4,000 carved granite pillars over a 4,000 feet corridor – said to be the longest in the world. Since the rock is not indigenous to the island, it makes the structure even more marvellous.

There are two lingas inside the sanctum – one built by Rama with sand (the main deity) and the other Shiva Linga brought from Mount Kailash by Hanuman – Vishwalinga.

**There are 64 water bodies or tīrthas** around the island of Rameshwaram, out of which 24 are considered sacred and bathing in them is believed to purge you of your sins. The main tīrtha is the Bay of Bengal called Agni Tīrtham.

There are also separate shrines for Ramanathaswamy and his consort goddess Parvathavardhini as well as shrines for Lord Vishnu, Lord Ganesha and Goddess Vishalakshi. There are also many halls in the temple such as the Setupati Mandapam, Kalyana Mandapam and Nandi Mandapam.

**What is the story behind Rameshwaram Jyotirlinga?**

Legend has it that Lord Rama worshipped Lord Shiva in this spot on his way back from Lanka – after defeating the demon king, Ravana. To atone for the sin of killing Ravana - a Brahmin and great Shiva devotee - Lord Rama offered prayers to Lord Shiva. Since there was no shrine for Shiva there, he sent Hanuman to Mount Kailash, Lord Shiva's abode, to bring the linga.

However, Hanuman could not return before the auspicious time set to perform the puja, so Sita made a linga out of sand – Ramalinga that Rama worshipped. When Hanuman returned, he was disappointed that Rama had not waited for his linga. To pacify him, Rama instructed devotees to worship the linga brought by Hanuman, which he called the Vishwalinga before the Ramalinga.

**Interesting facts about Rameshwaram Jyotirlinga:**

The Pamban Bridge is a railway bridge on the Palk Strait which connects the town of Rameshwaram on Pamban Island to mainland India.

According to the Ramayana, the bridge between mainland India and Sri Lanka is said to be Ram Setu Bridge that Rama built to reach Sri Lanka to rescue Sita from the clutches of Ravana. Subsequently, Ravana's brother, Vibheeshana, the new king of Sri Lanka had asked Rama to destroy the bridge. He did this with just one end of his bow and hence the southernmost tip of the mainland in Pamban Island is called Dhanushkodi.

Rameshwaram is one of the four main pilgrimage sites (char dham) that include Badrinath (Uttarakhand), Dwaraka, and Puri (Odisha).

It is the southernmost jyotirlinga in India.

While you can visit this spiritual spot at any time in the year, it would be best to visit it post monsoons and during the winter months - between October and April. Visiting this ancient and divine destination during Mahashivratri would be the ultimate treat for any devotee!

**Ref: Wikipedia:**

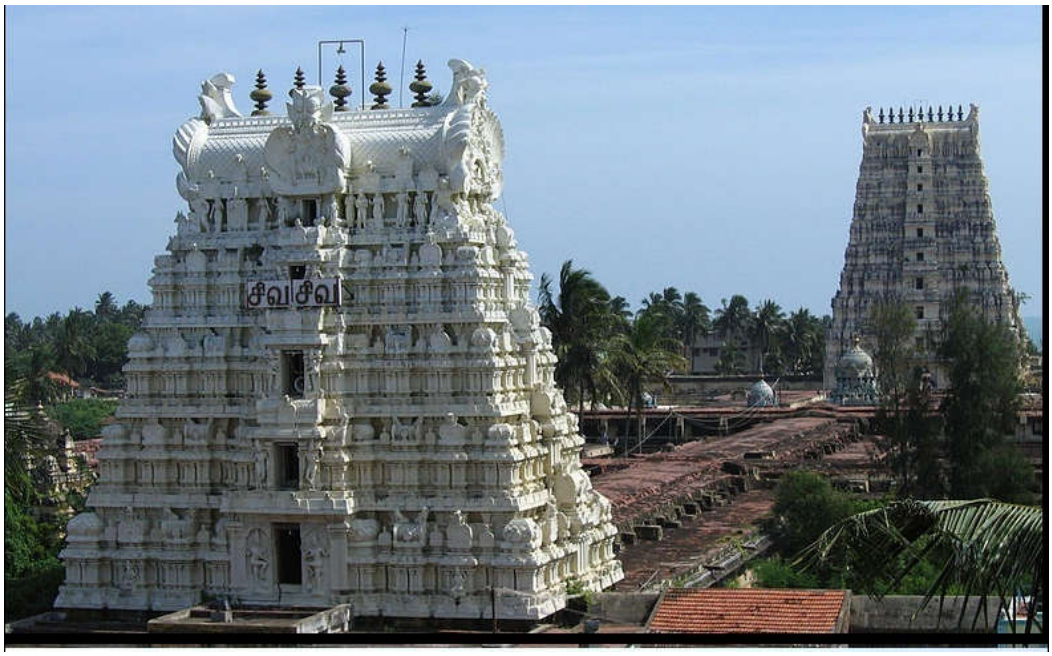
**About Rameswaram city:**

**Rameswaram** (also spelt as **Ramesvaram**, **Rameshwaram**) is a town and municipality in the Ramanathapuram district of the Indian state of Tamil Nadu. It is on Pamban Island separated from mainland India by the Pamban channel and is about 40 kilometres from Mannar Island, Sri Lanka. It is in the Gulf of Mannar, at the tip of the Indian peninsula.[1] Pamban Island, also known as Rameswaram Island, is connected to mainland India by the Pamban Bridge. Rameswaram is the terminus of the railway line from Chennai and Madurai. Together with Varanasi, it is considered to be one of the holiest places in India to Hindus, and part of the Char Dham pilgrimage.

It is said the Hindu god Rama built a bridge from here across the sea to Lanka to rescue his wife Sita from her abductor Ravana. The Ramanathaswamy Temple, dedicated to the Hindu god Shiva, is at the centre of the town and is closely associated with Rama. The temple and the town are considered a holy pilgrimage site for Shaivas and Vaishnavas.[2][3]

Rameswaram is the closest point from which to reach Sri Lanka from India, and geological evidence suggests that the Rama Sethu was a former land connection between India and Sri Lanka[*citation needed*]. The town has been in the news over the Sethusamudram Shipping Canal Project, Kachchatheevu, Sri Lankan Tamil refugees and capturing local fishermen for alleged cross-border activities by Sri Lankan Forces.[4] Rameswaram is administered by a municipality established in 1994. The town covers an area of 53 $km^2$ (20 sq mi) and had a population of 44,856 as of 2011. Tourism and fishery employ the majority of workforce in Rameswaram.

**Ramanatha Swamy temple tower:**




**Pamban bridge:**

**Legend:**

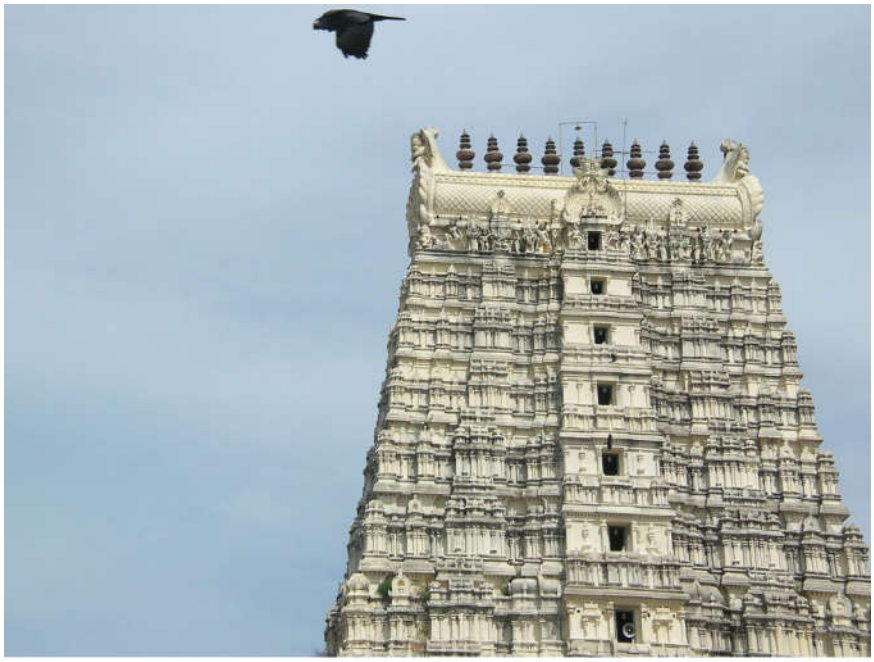
Rameswaram means "Lord of Rama" (*Rāma-īśvaram*) in Sanskrit, an epithet of Shiva, the presiding deity of the Ramanathaswamy Temple.[5] According to Hindu epic *Ramayana*, Rama, the seventh avatar of the god Vishnu, prayed to Shiva here to absolve any sins that he might have committed during his war against the demon-king Ravana in Sri Lanka.[6][3] According to the *Puranas* (Hindu scriptures), upon the advice of sages, Rama along with his wife Sita and his brother Lakshmana, installed and worshipped the lingam (an iconic symbol of Shiva) here to expiate the sin of *Brahmahatya* incurred while killing of the Brahmin Ravana.[7] To worship Shiva, Rama wanted to have a lingam and directed his trusted lieutenant Hanuman to bring it from Himalayas.[8][3] Since it took longer to bring the lingam, Sita built a lingam, made of just Sands of the shores, which is also believed to be the one in the sanctum of the temple.[8] This account is well supported by the original *Ramayana* authored by Valmiki were it is written in yudha kanda .Sethu Karai is a place 22 km before the island of Rameswaram from where Rama is believed to have built a floating stone bridge, the Ramsetu bridge, that further continued to Dhanushkodi in Rameswaram till Talaimannar in Sri Lanka.[6][9] According to another version, as quoted in *Adhyatma Ramayana*, Rama installed the lingam before the construction of the bridge to Lanka.[10][11][12][13]

**Ramanathaswamy Temple:**

**Ramanathaswamy Temple** (*Irāmanātasvāmi Kōyil*) is a Hindu temple dedicated to the god Shiva located on Rameswaram island in the state of Tamil Nadu, India. It is also one of the twelve Jyotirlinga temples. It is one of the 274 Paadal Petra Sthalams, where the three of the most revered Nayanars (Saivite saints), Appar, Sundarar and Tirugnana Sambandar, have glorified the temple with their songs. The temple was expanded during the 12th century by Pandya Dynasty, and its principal shrines sanctum were renovated by Jeyaveera Cinkaiariyan and his successor Gunaveera Cinkaiariyan of the Jaffna kingdom. The temple has the longest corridor among all Hindu temples in India.[1] The temple is located in Rameswaram considered a holy pilgrimage site for Shaivites, Vaishnavites and Smarthas. The presiding deity, the Lingam of

Ramanathaswamy (Shiva), was established and worshiped by Rama before crossing his bridge to Lanka.

**Front view of Rameshwaram temple:**



**Architecture:**

**Image of the east and west temple towers**

The primary deity of the temple is Ramanathaswamy (Shiva) in the form of *lingam*.[1] There are two lingams inside the sanctum - one built by Rama, from sand, residing as the main deity, Ramalingam and the one brought by Hanuman from Kailash called Vishwalingam.[4][5] Rama instructed that the Vishwalingam should be worshipped first since it was brought by Hanuman - the tradition continues even today.[5]

Like all ancient temples in South India, there is a high compound wall (madil) on all four sides of the temple premises measuring about 865 feet furlong from east to west and one furlong of 657 feet from north to south with huge towers (Gopurams) to the east and the west and finished gate towers to the north and south. The temple has striking long corridors in its interior, running between huge colonnades on platforms above five feet high.[6]

The second corridor is formed by sandstone pillars, beams, and ceiling. The junction of the third corridor on the west and the paved way leading from the western gopuram to the Setumadhava shrine forms a unique structure in the form of a chess board, popularly known as Chokkattan Madapam, where the Utsava deities are adorned and kept during the Vasanthotsavam (Spring festival) and on the 6th day festival in Adi (July–August) and Masi (February–March) conducted by the Setupati of Ramnad.

The outer set of corridors is reputed to be the longest in the world, measuring about 6.9 m in height, 400 feet each in the east and west and about 640 feet in the north and the south. The inner corridors are about 224 feet each in the east and the west and about 352 feet each in the north and the south.[7] Their width varies from 15.5 feet to 17 feet in the east and west about 172 feet on the north and south with width varying 14.5 feet to 17 feet.[5][7] The total length of these corridors is thus 3850 feet. There are about 1212 pillars in the outer corridor.[7] Their height is about 30 feet from the floor to the center of the roof. The main tower or *rajagopuram* is 53 m tall.[1] Most pillars are carved with individual compositions.[7] At the beginning, Ramanathaswamy Temple was a thatched shed. The present structure was the work of many individuals spread over a number of centuries. The pride of place in the establishment of the Temple goes to the Setupatis of Ramanathapuram. In the seventeenth century, Dalavai

Setupati built a portion of the main eastern Gopuram. In the late eighteenth century, the world-famous third corridor was constructed by Muthuramalinga Setupati who lived for forty-nine years and ruled between 1763 and 1795. The corridor was called "Chokkatan Mandapam". The Mukhya Pradhani (Chief Minister) was Muthuirullappa Pillai and the Chinna Pradhani (Deputy Chief Minister) was Krishna Iyengar. The Setupati's statue and those of his two *Pradhanis* (ministers) can be seen at the western entrance to the third corridor.

There are separate shrines for Ramanathaswamy and his consort goddess Parvathavardhini separated by a corridor.[6] There are separate shrines for the goddess Vishalakshi, the *utsava* images, *sayanagriha*, Vishnu and Ganesha. There are various halls inside the temple, namely Anuppu Mandapam, Sukravara Mandapam, Setupati Mandapam, Kalyana Mandapam, and Nandi Mandapam.

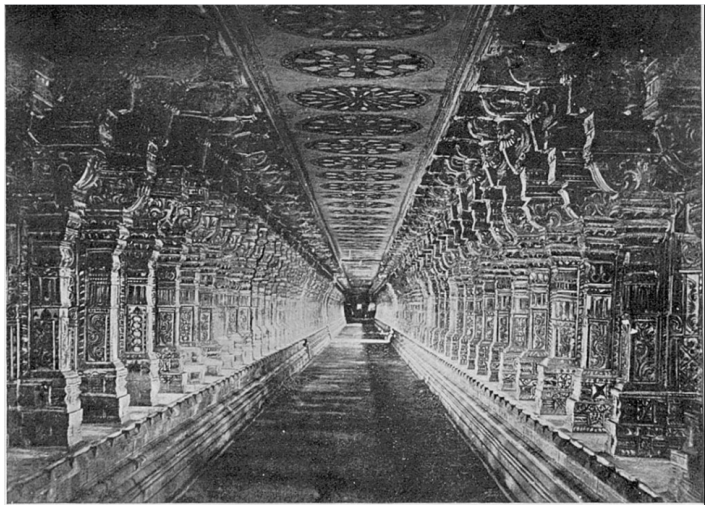
**Char Dham:**

Adi Sankara, the Guru of Advaita, who is believed to have started the Char Dhams

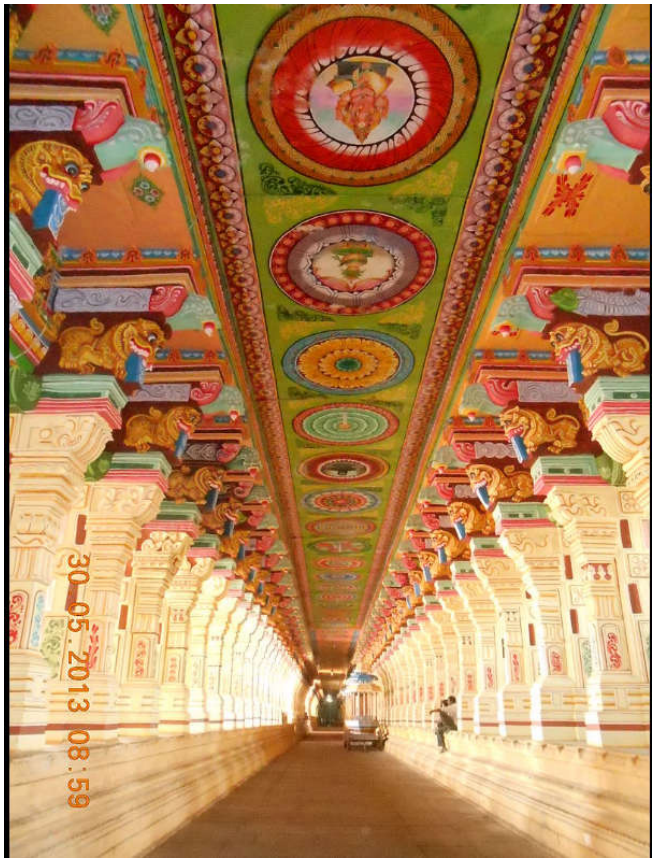
The temple is one of the holiest Hindu *Char Dham* (four divine sites) sites comprising Badrinath, Puri, Dwarka and Rameshwaram .[13] Though the origins are not clearly known, the Advaita school of Hinduism established by Sankaracharya, who created Hindu monastic institutions across India, attributes the origin of Char Dham to the seer.[14] The four monasteries lie across the four corners of India and their attendant temples are Badrinath Temple at Badrinath in the North, Jagannath Temple at Puri in the East, Dwarakadheesh Temple at Dwarka in the West and Ramanathaswamy Temple at Rameswaram in the South. The temples are revered by the various spiritual traditions of Hinduism, such as Saivism and Vaishnavism. The Char Dham pilgrimage is an all Hindu affair.[15] There are four abodes in the Himalayas called Chota Char Dham (*Chota* meaning small): Badrinath, Kedarnath, Gangotri and Yamunotri - all of these lie at the foothills of Himalayas.[16] The name *Chota* was added during the mid of 20th century to differentiate the original Char Dhams.[1] The journey across the four cardinal points in India is considered sacred by Hindus who aspire to visit these temples once in their lifetime.[17] Traditionally the trip starts at the eastern end from Puri, proceeding in clockwise direction in a manner typically followed for circumambulation in Hindu temples.[17]

## Temple contributions and donations from kings:

**A historic image of the temple corridor. The corridor is the longest for any Hindu temple in India:**



**A modern image of the temple corridor:**



The temple in its current shape is believed to have been built during the 17th century, while Fergusson believes the small vimana in the west corridor belongs to the 11th or 12th centuries.[6] The temple is said to have been sanctioned for construction by King Kizhavan Sethupathi or Raghunatha Kilavan. The contribution of the Jaffna kings of the Sethupathy dynasty to the temple was considerable.[5] King Jeyaveera Cinkaiariyan (1380–1410 CE) shipped stone blocks from Koneswaram temple, Trincomalee to renovate the temple's sanctum sanctorum. Jeyaveera Cinkaiariyan's successor Gunaveera Cinkaiariyan (Pararacacekaran V), a trustee at Rameswaram who also oversaw structural development of this temple and the promotion of Saivite beliefs donated part of his revenue to Koneswaram. Especially to be remembered are the immense sums that were spent during the tenure of Pradani Muthirulappa Pillai towards the restoration of the Pagodas which were falling into ruins and the splendid Chockattan Mantapam or the cloistered precincts of the temple at Rameswaram that he finally completed. The rulers of Sri Lanka also contributed to the temple - Parakrama Bahu (1153-1186 CE) was involved in the construction of the sanctum sanctorum of the temple.[5]

Pappakudi (Ayan) a village in present Kalayar Kovil Taluk was donated as a grant to Rameshwaram Temple and one Deva Venkala Perumal Ramanathar in (1667 CE) by Perumal Servaikaran Son of Sokkappan Servaikarar who belongs to Pandiyur. They are local Chieftain under Tirumalai Regunatha Sethupathy Thevar Rein in Ramnad Kingdom. The grant details are published by Government Press, Madras Presidency for Archeological Survey of India in 1885. Along with

Pappakudi, Anandur and Urasur villages are also donated to Rameshwaram Temple. These Villages falls under Melaimakani Seermai province of Radhanallur Division [26]

**Links to Youtube videos:**

**Rameshwaram darshan:**

**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qIA1aJIBpF0**

**Rameshwaram darshan:**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RC-mrKbTm64

**Maha Shivaratri Ramanathaswami Rameshwaram temple in ...**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z-p85hFiHKg

**Grand Maha Shivaratri Celebrations At Rameshwaram ...**

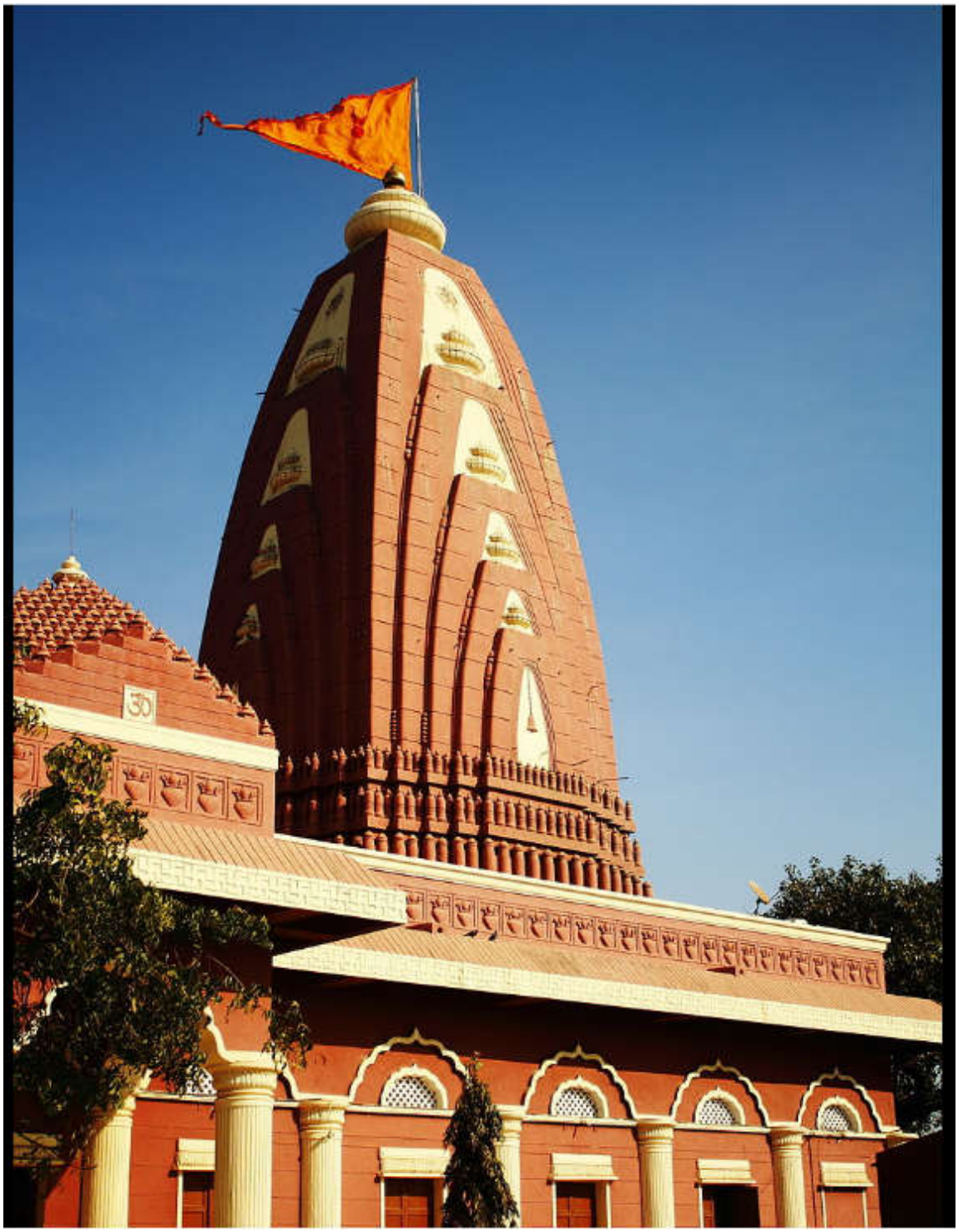
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BJ9-MlZr7I4

**Rameswaram Maha Shivaratri festival at the temple today ...**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hYEA35vUXS4

## 8. Nageshwara Jyotirlinga temple:

**Nageshwar Jyotirling Jamnagar Gujarat:**



**Nageshwar Jyotirling:**

**The temples at Jageshwar, in the background of Darukavana, the holy Deodar forest:**

**Ref: Wikipedia:**

Nageshvara is one of the temples mentioned in the Shiva Purana and is one of the twelve Jyotirlingas.

Nageshvara Jyotirlinga is located in GujaratNageshvara Jyotirlinga

**Legend:**

The Shiva Purana says Nageshvara Jyotirlinga is in 'the Darukavana', which is an ancient name of a forest in India. 'Darukavana' finds mention in Indian epics, such as Kamyakavana, Dvaitavana, Dandakavana.

A narrative in the Shiva Purana about the Nageshvara Jyotirlinga tells of a demon named Daruk, who attacked a Shiva devotee named Supriya and imprisoned him along with many others in his city of Darukavana, a city under the sea inhabited by sea snakes and demons. At the urgent exhortations of Supriya, the prisoners started to chant the holy mantra of Shiva and immediately thereafter Lord Shiva appeared and the demon was vanquished,[8] later residing there in the form of a Jyotirlinga. The demon had a wife, a demoness named Daruka who worshipped Mata Parvati. As a result of her penance and devotion, Mata Parvati enabled her to master the forest where she performed her devotions, and renamed the forest 'Darukavana' in her honour. Wherever Daruka went the forest followed her. In order to save the demons of Darukavana from the punishment of the gods, Daruk summoned up the power Parvati had given her. She then moved the entire forest into the sea where they continued their campaign against the hermits, kidnapping people and keeping them confined in their new lair under the sea, which was how that great Shiva devotee, Supriya, had wound up there.[8]

The arrival of Supriya caused a revolution. He set up a lingam and made the prisoners recite the mantra Om Namaha Shivay in honour of Shiva while he prayed to the lingam. The demons' response to the chanting was to attempt to kill Supriya, though they were thwarted when Shiva appeared and handed him a divine weapon that saved his life. Daruka and the demons were defeated and Parvati saved the remaining demons. The lingam that Supriya had set up was called Nagesha; it is the tenth lingam.[8] Shiva once again assumed the form of a

Jyotirlinga with the name Nageshwar, while the Goddess Parvati was known as Nageshwari. Lord Shiva then announced that he would show the correct path to those who would worship him.

**Location controversy:**

The actual location of the legendary forest of Darukavana is debated. No other important clues indicate the location of the Jyotirlinga. 'Darukavana' remains the only clue.

The name Darukavana, is derived from daruvana (forest of deodar trees), is thought to exist in Almora. Deodar (daru vriksha) is found abundantly only in the western Himalayas, not in peninsular India. Deodar trees have been associated with Lord Shiva in ancient Hindu texts. Hindu sages used to reside and perform meditation in deodar forests to please Lord Shiva. Also, according to the ancient treatise Prasadmandanam,

"हिमाद्रेरूत्तरे पार्श्वे देवदारूवनं परम् पावनं शंकरस्थानं तत्र् सर्वे शिवार्चिताः।"

Because of this the 'Jageswara' temple in Almora, Uttarakhand is commonly identified as Nageshvara Jyotirlinga.

The written name of Darukavana could be misread as 'Dwarakavana' which would point to the Nageswara temple at Dwaraka. However, no forest is in this part of Dwaraka that finds mention in any of the Indian epics. The narratives of Shri Krishna, mention Somanatha and the adjoining Prabhasa tirtha, but not Nageswara or Darukavana in Dwaraka.

Darukavana might exist next to the Vindhya Mountains. It is south-southwest of the Vindhyas extending to the sea in the west. In the Dvadasha Jyotirlinga Stotra (6),[9] Shankaracharya praised this Jyotirlinga as Naganath:

"Yamye sadange nagaretiramye vibhushitangam vividhaishcha bhogai Sadbhaktimuktipradamishamekam shrinaganatham sharanam prapadye"

This could be taken to mean that it is located in the south ['yamye'] at the town of 'Sadanga', which was the ancient name of Aundh in Maharashtra, south of the Jageswara shrine in Uttarakhand and west of Dwaraka Nageshvara.

**Also, there is another Naganath temple in Maharashtra:**

(Ref: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aundha_Nagnath_Temple)

**History:**

Aundha Nagnath (Nageshwaram) is a Temple in Hingoli District in the state of Maharashtra, India, an important place of pilgrimage.[3][4] The present temple is said to have been built by the Seuna (Yadava) dynasty and dates to 13th century.[1] The first temple is said to be from time of the *Mahabharata* and is believed to have been constructed by Yudhishthira, eldest of the Pandavas, when they were expelled for 14 years from Hastinapur.[2] It has been stated that this temple building was of seven-storyed before it was sacked by Aurangzeb.[5]

Today, however, the Sanctum Sanctorum, which is located below the ground level accessed by two deep steps is with The narrow chamber offers little space for the devotees to worship, added to which constant prayers (Abhisheka) by Chants of Pandits allow peace of mind for offering ones personal prayers.

**Structure:**

The temple covers an area of 669.60 sq mt (7200 sq ft) and height of 18.29 m (60 ft)[1][6] The total area in which temple campus is spread is about 60,000 sq. ft.[2] Apart from the religious significance, the temple itself is worth seeing for its unbelievably beautiful carvings.[2] The base of the present temple is in Hemadpanti architecture although its upper portion was repaired during later period and is in the style which was prevalent during the Peshwa's regime. 5 temple of goddess in aundha nagnath town. name is mahakali, padmavati, kankeshwari, kalikamata, khandeshwari of these kankeshwari, khandeshwari & padmavati is a beautiful natural place. this place is 2 km long from nagnath temple. kalikamata & mahakali is in aundha nagnath town. this place is fewlong from nagnath temple.

**Narratives:**

The temple is also closely associated with lives of Namdev, Visoba Khechara and Dnyaneshwar, the sants revered by the Varkari sect of Hinduism.

Namdev met his guru, Visoba Khechara, at Aundha Nagnath Temple. He was advised to visit this temple by Jñāneśvar. According to the text *Jñāndev Gatha*, Jñāneśvar and Muktai instruct Namdev to journey to temple of Aundha

Nagnath in search of a proper guru. In the temple, Namdev finds Visoba resting with his feet on the lingam, the symbol of Shiva. Namdev reproached him for having insulted Shiva. Visoba asked Namdev to place his feet elsewhere and wherever Namdev placed Visoba's feet, a lingam sprang up. Thus, through his yogic powers, Visoba filled the whole temple with Shiva-lingam and taught Namdev the omnipresence of God.[7][8]

There is one famous story told about Namdev and Aundha Nagnath temple. Once when he was chanting Bhajans in front of the temple with his senior gurus like Jñāneśvar, Visoba Khechara and few more Varkari, the temple pujari told them their singing in front of the temple is disturbing their routine pooja and prayers and asked them to go away from temple. The temple pujari told Bhagat Namdev, insulted him and said he is of lower caste and why he has come to the temple. Then Bhagat Namdev went back side of the temple and started singing bhajans there. But God, in order to be in the sight of the pining devotee and listen bhajans, revolved the temple.[9] It is testimonial to that miracle why Nandi is located on back side of temple.[9]

Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism is said to have visited Aundha Nagnath temple when he travelled this area and also visited Narsi Bamani, the birthplace of Namdev. It may be mentioned here that Namdev is also revered in Sikhism, as Bhagat Namdeo.[9][10] And it is also said that the temple does not have any foundation.

**Some photos of Nageshwar mandir in Dwaraka, Gujarat:**

**Legend:**

Nageshwar was believed to be known as 'Darukavana', which is an ancient epic name of a forest in India. Below are two well-known legends attached to this mystical temple:

According to legend, there was a group of dwarves, the balakhilyas, who lived in Darukvana. They were devouts of Lord Shiv. To test their devotion, the Lord came to Darukavana disguised as a naked ascetic, wearing nothing but serpents on his body. The wives of the sages were drawn towards him and left their husbands. Enraged, the sages cursed the ascetic so that his ling (phallus) would fall off. The Shiv Ling then fell on the earth and the entire earth shuddered. Lord Vishnu and Lord Brahma pleaded with Lord Shiva to take his ling back before the world was destroyed. Pacified, the Lord took back his linga but left a symbol of the linga that would remain there forever.

The second legend is that according to the Shiv Purana, hundreds of years ago two demons Daruka and Daruki lived in Darukavan. Daruka was blessed by Goddess Parvati. However, he misused the blessings and terrorized the local folks. One such time, he imprisoned a local woman, Supriya. Supriya told her fellow inmates to take the name of the Lord Shiva and no harm would come to them. When Daruka heard this, he was enraged. He rushed to kill her but Lord Shiv appeared to protect her. As Daruka was blessed by his own wife, the Lord could not kill him so instead he took the form of a lingam and promised to protect Supriya and the local folks forever in Dwarka.

Ref: https://www.artofliving.org/mahashivratri/nageshwar-jyotirlinga

*Nageshwar* means 'Lord of serpents', so one who worships Nageshwar will have a poison-free mind and body. Lord Shiva also has a snake (Vasuki) around his neck.

### Where is the Nageshwar Jyotirlinga located?

The Nageshwar Jyotirlinga is located in Daarukavanam between Gomti and Dwarka on the coast of Saurashtra in Gujarat, India.

### History of Nageshwar Jyotirlinga:

It is believed that Adi Shankaracharya laid the foundations of his Western Math at Kalika Peetha here.

### Special features of Nageshwar Temple:

There is a huge statue (25m) of Lord Shiva in a sitting position, a large garden and a pond in this temple. The linga is made of Dwaraka shila and has small chakras on it. It is in the shape of a *tri-mukhi rudraksha* (sacred beads representing Lord Shiva) and faces south, while the temple faces east.

### What is the story behind Nageshwar Jyotirlinga?

The legend goes that there was once a demon called Daruk who lived in the forest along with his wife, Daruka. Because of a boon from Goddess Parvati, the demons

had great powers which they abused to disturb festivities. They even captured and imprisoned a great devotee of Lord Shiva – a merchant named Supriya. Even in prison, Supriya continued his Shiva puja, wearing the holy *rudraksha* and chanting the Shiva mantra - *Om Namah Shivaya.* His devotion touched the Lord as he appeared before him, slayed the demon and saved him. The place where the demon was killed is called Daarukavanam. It is said that the Lord placed the Shiva Linga (called Naganath) there to establish his residence there.

It is also believed that Lord Krishna himself used to worship Lord Shiva here; he is said to have performed the rudrabhishekam here.

### Interesting facts about Nageshwar Jyotirlinga:

- It is believed that those who worship Nageshwar Jyotirlinga and meditate here will be freed from all poisons – both physical and spiritual (like anger and temptation) ones.
- There is some confusion about the actual site of the jyotirlinga. There are two other temples which have shrines for Nageshwar – Nagnath at Audhgram near Purna in Andhra Pradesh, and Jageshwar temple near Almora in Uttar Pradesh.
- There is an interesting story behind why the linga faces south. Legend has it that a devotee called Naamdev was asked by other devotees to step aside and not hide the Lord while chanting his name. Naamdev asked the others to suggest a direction where the Lord does not exist. The angry devotees carried him to the south and left him there. They were astonished to find that the linga was also facing south!
- People also worship Goddess Parvati along with Lord Shiva here.

**Photos:**

Nageshvara Jyotirlinga Temple ...

Nageshwar Jyotirlinga Temple, Dwark...

Nageshvara Jyotirlinga , Uttrakhand ...

Nageshwar Jyotirlinga, Dwarka - Info ...

Nageshwar Jyotirlinga Templ...

Nageshwar Jyotirlinga Temple, Dwa...

**Links to Videos:**

**Nageshwar Jyotirlinga, Darukvana, Gujarat:**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mRiB2_XAM_E

**Nageshwar Jyotirlinga, Darukvana, Gujarat-- Darshan:**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UG8hxbQJlic

**Nageshwar Jyotirlinga, Darukvana, Gujarat-:**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MJ0FG87RJrU

**History of Nageshwar Jyotirlinga:**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qgox0l39Uqk

**Mahashivarathri special: 12 Jyotirlinga darshan:**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y_CdkjRKv9Y

# 9. Kashi Vishwanath Jyotirlinga Temple

Vishwanath Temple - Vishwanath Temple ...
mahashivratri.org

**Ref: Wikipedia**

**Kashi Vishwanath Temple** is one of the most famous Hindu temples dedicated to Lord Shiva. It is located in Vishwanath Gali[1] of Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh in India. The Temple stands on the western bank of the holy river Ganga, and is one of the twelve Jyotirlingas, or Jyotirlingams, the holiest of Shiva Temples. The main deity is known by the names Shri Vishwanath and Vishweshwara (IAST: *Vishveshvara*) literally meaning *Lord of the Universe*. Varanasi city was called *Kashi* in ancient times, and hence the temple is popularly called Kashi Vishwanath Temple. The etymology of the name Vishveshvara is Vishva: Universe, Ishvara: lord, one who has dominion.

The Temple has been referred to in Hindu scriptures for a very long time as a central part of worship in the Shaiva Philosophy. It has been destroyed and re-constructed a number of times in history. The last structure was demolished by Aurangzeb, the sixth Mughal emperor who constructed the Gyanvapi Mosque on its site.[2] The current structure was built on an adjacent site by the Maratha ruler, Ahilya Bai Holkar of Indore in 1780.[3]

Since 1983, the temple has been managed by the government of Uttar Pradesh. During the religious occasion of Shivratri, Kashi Naresh (King of Kashi) is the chief officiating priest.

**History**:

The temple is mentioned in the Puranas including the Kashi Khanda (section) of Skanda Purana. The original Vishwanath temple was destroyed by army of Aibak in 1194 CE, when he defeated the Raja of Kannauj as a commander of Mohammad Ghori. The temple was rebuilt by a Gujarati merchant during the reign of Delhi's Sultan Iltutmish (1211–1266 CE). It was demolished again during the rule of either Hussain Shah Sharqi (1447–1458) or Sikandar Lodhi (1489–1517). Raja Man Singh built the temple during Mughal emperor Akbar's rule. Raja Todar Mal further re-built the temple with Akbar's funding at its original site in 1585.[4]

In 1669 CE, Emperor Aurangzeb destroyed the temple and built the Gyanvapi Mosque in its place.[5] The remains of the erstwhile temple can be seen in the foundation, the columns and at the rear part of the mosque.[6]

Gyanvapi Mosque, sketched as *Temple of Vishveshvur* in 1834 by James Prinsep

**Current temple**:

Elevation of the present temple structure

In 1742, the Maratha ruler Malhar Rao Holkar made a plan to demolish the mosque and reconstruct Vishweshwar temple at the site. However, his plan did not materialize, partially because of intervention by the Nawab of Awadh, who was given the control of the territory.[8]:2 Around 1750, the Maharaja of Jaipur commissioned a survey of the land around the site, with the objective of purchasing land to rebuild the Kashi Vishwanath temple.[8]:85 However, his plan to rebuild the temple did not materialize either. In 1780, Malhar Rao's daughter-in-law Ahilyabai Holkar constructed the present temple adjacent to the mosque. In 1828, Baiza Bai, widow of the Maratha ruler Daulat Rao Scindhia of Gwalior State, built a low-roofed colonnade with over 40 pillars in the Gyan Vapi precinct.[9] During 1833–1840 CE, the boundary of Gyanvapi Well, the ghats and other nearby temples were constructed. Many noble families from various ancestral kingdoms of the Indian subcontinent and their prior establishments make generous contributions for the operations of the temple. A 7-foot high stone statue of Nandi bull, gifted by the Rana Bahadur Shah of Nepal sometime between 1800 to 1804, it lies to the east of the colonnade. In 1835, Maharaja Ranjit Singh of the Sikh Empire, donated 1 tonne of gold for plating the temple's dome. In 1841, RaghujiBhonsle III of Nagpur donated silver to the temple.[8]:200[10]

The temple was managed by a hereditary group of pandas or mahants. After the death of Mahant Devi Dutt, a dispute arose among his successors. In 1900, his brother-in-law Pandit VisheshwarDayal Tewari filed a lawsuit, which resulted in him being declared the head priest.[11]

The Manikarnika Ghat on the banks of Ganges near to the Kashi Vishwanath Temple is considered as a Shakti Peetha, a revered place of worship for the Shaktism sect. The Daksha Yaga, a Shaivite literature is considered as an important literature which is the story about the origin of Shakti Peethas.[19]

**Structure:**

The original holy well—Gyanvapi in between the temple and Gyanvapi Mosque

The temple complex consists of a series of smaller shrines, located in a small lane called the Vishwanatha Galli, near the river. The linga of the main deity at the shrine is 60 centimetres (24 in) tall and 90 centimetres (35 in) in circumference housed in a silver altar.[24] The main temple is quadrangle and is surrounded by shrines of other gods. There are small temples for Kaalbhairav, Dhandapani, Avimukteshwara, Vishnu, Vinayaka, Sanishwara, Virupaksha and Virupaksh Gauri in the complex. There is a small well in the temple called the *Jnana Vapi* also spelled as *Gyaanvapi* (the wisdom well). The Jnana Vapi well sites to the north of the main temple and during the invasion by the Mughals the Jyotirlinga was hidden in the well to protect it at the time of invasion. It is said that the main priest of the temple jumped in the well with the Shiv Ling in order to protect the Jyotirlinga from invaders.

According to the structure of the temple, there is a Sabha Griha or Congregation Hall leading to the inner GarbhaGriha or Sanctum Sanctorum. The venerable Jyotirlinga is a dark brown colored stone which is enshrined in the Sanctum, placed on a silver platform. Structure of the Mandir is composed of three parts. The first compromises a spire on the Mandir of Lord Vishwanath or Mahadeva. The second is gold dome and the third is the gold spire atop Lord Vishwanath carrying a flag and a trident.

The Kashi Vishwanath temple receives around 3,000 visitors every day. On certain occasions, the numbers reach 1,000,000 and more. Noteworthy about the temple

is 15.5-metre-high gold spire and gold dome. There are three domes each made up of pure gold, supplied by Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1835.

**Importance of the temple**:

Street near temple

Located on the banks of the holy Ganges, Varanasi is regarded among the holiest of the Hindu cities. The Kashi Vishwanath temple is widely recognized as one of the most important places of worship in the Hindu religion. Inside the Kashi Vishwanath Temple is the Jyotirlinga of Shiva, Vishveshvara or Vishvanath. The Vishveshvara Jyotirlinga has a very special and unique significance in the spiritual history of India.

Many leading saints, including Adi Sankaracharya, Ramakrishna Paramhansa, Swami Vivekananda, Bamakhyapa, Goswami Tulsidas, Swami Dayananda Saraswati, Sathya Sai Baba, Yogiji Maharaj, Pramukh Swami Maharaj, Mahant Swami Maharaj and Gurunanak have visited the site.[25][*unreliable source?*] A visit to the temple and a bath in the river Ganges is one of many methods believed to lead one on a path to Moksha (liberation). Thus, Hindus from all over the world try to visit the place at least once in their lifetime. There is also a tradition that one should give up at least one desire after a pilgrimage the temple, and the pilgrimage would also include a visit to the temple at Rameswaram in Tamil Nadu in Southern India, where people take water samples of the Ganges to perform prayer at the temple and bring back sand from

near that temple. Because of the immense popularity and holiness of Kashi Vishwanath temple, hundreds of temples across India have been built in the same architectural style. Many legends record that the true devotee achieves freedom from death and saṃsāra by the worship of Shiva, Shiva's devotees on death being directly taken to his abode on Mount Kailash by his messengers and not to Yama. The superiority of Shiva and his victory over his own nature—Shiva is himself identified with death—is also stated. There is a popular belief that Shiva himself blows the mantra of salvation into the ears of people who die naturally at the Vishwanath temple.

Ref: https://www.artofliving.org/mahashivratri/vishveshwar-jyotirlinga

Of the 12 jyotirlingas, Vishweshwar or Vishwanath Jyotirlinga is the most famous as it is considered one of the holiest shrines in the world. Vishwanath means 'Ruler of the World or Universe.'

**Where is the Vishweshwar Jyotirlinga located?**

It is located in Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh, India, on the western bank of the Ganga River. Varanasi was formerly called Kashi, and so this temple is popularly known as Kashi Vishwanath temple.

## History of Vishweshwar Jyotirlinga:

The earliest mention of this temple is in the Puranas.

It has been demolished by Qutb-ud-din-Aibak in 1194 AD and then by other invaders over the centuries including Mughal emperor, Aurangazeb, in 1669, who built a mosque on its site.

It was re-built by various rulers including Mughal emperor Akbar's general, Raja Man Singh, and his finance minister, Raja Todar Mal.

The current structure was built on an adjacent site by Maratha ruler, Rani Ahilya Bai Holkar, of Indore, in 1777.

## Special features of Vishweshwar Temple:

The jyotirlinga is at the center of the sanctum on a silver altar. There are shrines to other gods such as Vishnu, Vinayaka, Kalabhairav and Saneeshwara.

There is a well inside the temple, which is called the wisdom well or jnana vapi. It is believed that the linga was hidden here when the Mughals came to destroy the temple.

The spire or shikhara was plated with gold donated by Maharaja Ranjit Singh (who ruled the North-west of the Indian subcontinent) in 1835. Since its three domes are gold-plated, tourists call it the 'Golden Temple of Varanasi'.

## What is the story behind Vishweshwar Jyotirlinga?

It is believed that Lord Shiva lived here but his mother-in-law was unhappy with his abode. To please his consort, Goddess Parvati, Lord Shiva requested the demon, Nikumbha to make the place suitable for his family at Kashi. Parvati was so pleased with the residence that she offered food to everyone and that is why she is worshipped as Annapoorani or Annapurna. Even Lord Shiva is believed to hold a begging bowl in front of her, seeking food.

**Interesting facts about Vishweshwar Jyotirlinga:**

- It is believed that those who live or/and die in Kashi will attain Moksha or enlightenment. Any act of goodness here will eliminate all sins.
- Kashi is one of the oldest cities in the world.
- It is believed that if you see the golden spire and then make a wish, it comes true!

From Ref: https://shaivam.org/temples-special/12-jyothirlingas-11-Kashi-shri-visveshwar-varanasi:

## Kashi SHRI VISHWESHWAR (Varanasi)

### Location of Kashi VishvanathJyothirlinga

Where the Varana and Asi rivers join the Ganges, a beautiful city was built there in the ancient times. It was named Varanasi. Varanasi, a prime place of pilgrimage, a tribe called kasha used to live. Therefore, Varanasi was also known as Kashi. Near Kashi, Ganga flows in the shape of a bow. Hence it acquired special importance. A king called Deivodas expanded this area.

Varanasi is located in Uttarpradesh, in the Gangetic plains.

### Purana of kashivishwanath jyotirlinga

Nirvikarcahitanya and Sanatan Brahma have assumed the form of SagunaVishwarupa from the initial Nirgun Roopa or form. The Shiva Shakti roopa became the Purusha (man) and Stree (the woman) again. Prakriti and Purusha (Nature and man) (Shiva-Shakti) were once ordained by Shiva to do tapas in the universe in order to create the best being. He specified the best place for this purpose. When a prayer was held, Nirgun Shiva, with His own

powers and aura, created a wonderful city called Panchakoshi. Vishnu, who resided there, spent a lot of time praying to Shiva after which several watersprings originated there. Vishnu was amazed at this wonderous event, and even as he tilled his head, a gemstone fell from his ear. Because of this place, it was also called Manikarnika. The entire PanchKoshi area of Manikarnika waters were then gathered into the Trident by Shiva. Then from the navel of Vishnu was born a lotus flower with Brahma in it. Brahma was ordained by Shiva to create a world, at which Brahma created this wonderful world. It had fifty crore Yojanas of area and fourteen lokas. In order to save the lives of these who are bound by their own actions or karma. Shiva kept panchakoshi city away from the entire universe. In this city, Shiva Himself established the saviour MuktidayakJyotirLinga, which He can never leave. Shiva removed this very Kashi from His Trident and set it in this mortal world. It was not to be destroyed when Brahma's day ends, but during Pralay i.e., final destruction of the world, Shiva saved it by keeping it safe in his trident. So the kashi is called avimuktakshetra. In Kashi, the Avimukteshwar Linga is there forever. Those who can never hope for salvation, attain Moksha here.

This holiest city of Panchakoshi, with its capacity to destroy every conceivable sin, is the vehicle of a special Moksha by the name "Samyugha". That is the reason why this city which is ruled by Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesha, is the place, where even divines want to die. Sarwaguna from inside and Tamoguna from outside, are the qualities of Rudra here. When

prayed to, VishwanathaBahagavan Sri Shankar made this abode and resided there with Parvati.

## Glory of Kashi

Kashi city is the place for Moksha and Ganga. Those who live here attain Mukti or Salvation, even without having to travel to any place of pilgrimage. Any one, be it a man, woman, young, old, Sahava, pure or impure, Prasuta, Aprasuta, Swadesh, Andaja, Udibhaja, of whatever caste, all attain Moksha. There is not an iota of doubt in this. Whatever a person may be doing, eat, sleep or anything else, if he departs from this world from Avimukteshwar, he definitely attains Moksha. Any small act of goodness or Punyakarya, takes away all the sins. Good as well as bad people are born on this earth. But by living in Kashi, both attain Moksha. Later, several people came forward to build this temple. A king by the name Banar developed this city of pilgrimage. About one and half thousand beautiful temples were built here. The tower of the Vishweshwara temple is a hundred feet high.

Kashi nagar is so great that even if the universe is to be destroyed in Pralaya, it would remain intact. Dandapani and Kalabhairav guard this city. They stay there forever. On the Ganga banks eighty four bathing ghats are located. There are also several teerthkundas. They have been there right from the times of Vedas.

## History of the Kashi Vishwanath Temple

Varanasi, which was a pious place of pilgrimage for the hindus, soon became an eyesore and source of jealousy for the Muslims. From 1033 to 1669 AD Kashi came under several destructive attacks. Temples were demolished and Masjids built there instead. But due to the dedication of the Hindu devotees, the JyotirLinag pilgrimage place continued to develop. During the reign of the British and the Marathas, this place really developed well. Even the Jaina and Boudha monks helped to keep the place of the city intact.

The Kashi Vishweshwar temple as we see it now was built by Ahalya Devi Holkar in 1777 AD. In 1785 AD, the then King of Kashi, Mansaram and his son Belvant Singh built many more temples near Varanasi. In 1755 AD, the Avadh pantofpratinidhi (representative) got the old temple of Bindumadhava repaired and renovated it beautifully. The kalabhairava temple was built by SrimantBaji Rao Peshwa in 1852 AD.

King Ranjit Singh had the Kashi Vishwanath temple towers covered in gold. A huge bell hangs in the temple. It was donated by the King of Nepal. Surrounding Saranath, there are many Budhhist stupas, Viharas and Chaitra grihas. In 1931 AD the mahabodhi society had built a very beautiful Buddha temple in Saranath.

The Hindu devotees visit Kashi to make offering. Here they perform many rituals and consider themselves blessed. Along side, several foreign tourists visit this place regularly. Places worth seeing include Ghats, temples, tapobhoomi and the scenic beauty of the surroundings. Kashi Kshetra and Sri VishweswaraJyotirLinga are connected as the holiest shrines in the world. The Ganga water here is considered as the nectar of the earth. Dying in Kashi or performing the final rites is considered as the way to the Heavens. Kashi - Rameshwar(1) yatra is the prime pilgrimage for the Hindus.

**Photos:**

Kashi Vishwanath Temple | Shiv Temple...

Kashi Vishwanath Tem...

kashi-vishwanath

Kashi Vishwanath Temple Varanasi ...
jyotirlingatemples.com

Kashi Vishwanath Temple Varanasi ...
jyotirlingatemples.com

Kashi Vishwanath Jyotirlinga Temple ...

Vishwanath Temple - Vishwanath Temple ...
mahashivratri.org

Vishweshwar (Kashi Vishwanath Tem...
pawanpath.up.gov.in

Vishwanath-Jyotirlinga-Kashi: | Shiva ...
in.pinterest.com

Kashi Vishwanath Jyotirlinga Templ...
shrimathuraji.com

Maha Shivarathri from Kashi Vishwanat...
youtube.com

Kashi Vishwanath Jyotirlinga Temple ...
shrimathuraji.com

Kashi Vishwanath Temple Varanasi ...
jyotirlingatemples.com

**Links to videos:**

**Kashi Vishwanath Mandir Darshan:**

https://youtu.be/Dm1MRBAi_fU

**Kashi Vishwanath mahashivarathriabhishekam:**

**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GnI-eXeDTj8**

**Mahashivarathri....live darshan:**

**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CfeIP-Cvbcg**

**Jyotirlinga dashanam:**

**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ugsLRu0VBx8**

**Kashi Vishwanathashtakam by S. P. Balasubramanyam:**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hEYbVtf0UNQ

**Kashi Vishwanathashtakam by Bombay sisters, with Lyrics in Devanagari:**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gI5Wj7wfP94

## 10. **Trimbakeshwar Shiva JyotirlingaTemple**

**Tryambakeshwar Mandir**

**Ref: Wikipedia**

**Trimbakeshwar Shiva JyotirlingaTemple** is an ancient Hindu temple in the town of Trimbak, in the Trimbakeshwar tehsil in the Nashik District of Maharashtra, India, 28 km from the city of Nashik and 40 km from Nashik road. It is dedicated to the god Shiva and is one of the twelve *jyotirlingas* where the Hindu genealogy registers at Trimbakeshwar, Maharashtra are kept. The origin of the sacred Godavari river is near Trimbak.

Kusavarta *kunda* (sacred pond) in the temple premises, built by Shrimant Sardar Raosaheb Parnerkar who was the Fadnavis of Indore State, is the source of the Godavari River, the longest river in peninsular India. A bust of Sardar Fadnavis

and his wife can be seen on the edge of the kunda. The current temple was built by Peshwa Balaji Baji Rao.

**Architecture:**

The temple is located between three hills namely Brahmagiri, Nilagiri and Kalagiri. The temple has three *lingas* (an iconic form of Shiv) representing Shiv, Vishnu and Brahma. The temple tank is called Amritavarshini, which measured 28 m (92 ft) bu 30 m (98 ft). There are three other bodies of water, namely, Bilvatheertha, Viswananthirtha and Mukundathirtha. There are images of various deities, namely, Gangadevi, Jaleswara, Rameswara, Gautameswara, Kedarnatha, Rama, Krishna, Parasurama and Lakshmi Narayana. The temple has also several monasteries and samadhis of saints.[1]

**Temple legend:**

Trimbakeshwar is a religious center having one of the twelve Jyotirlingas. The extraordinary feature of the Jyotirlinga located here is its three faces embodying Lord Brahma, Lord Vishnu, and Lord Rudra. Due to the excessive use of water, the linga has started to erode. It is said that this erosion symbolizes the eroding nature of human society. The Lingas are covered by a jeweled crown which is placed over the Gold Mask of Tridev (Brahma Vishnu Mahesh). The crown is said to be from the age of Pandavs and consists of diamonds, emeralds, and many precious stones. The crown is displayed every Monday from 4-5 pm (Shiv).

All other Jyotirlingas have Shiva as the main deity. The entire black stone temple is known for its appealing architecture and sculpture and is at the foothills of a mountain called Brahmagiri. Three sources of the Godavari originate from the Brahmagiri mountain.

**Close up of top of Tryambakeshwara temple:**

**Entrance to temple:**

**Kusavarta, a place where river Godavari takes course:**

**Back view of temple:**

**Story related to Godavari river:**

Brahmadev worshipped God Trivikram when he came to Satya Loka (on earth) with the same holy water of the Ganges, to get the river Ganges held up by God Shankar on his head, to flow. There was a famine of 24 years and people were affected by the pangs of hunger. However, Varun - the God of Rains, pleased with Sage Gautama arranged rains every day in Gautama's Ashram (dwelling place) which was in Trimbakeshwar. Gautama used to sow rice in the surrounding fields of his Ashram in the morning, reap the crop in the afternoon and with it fed a large group of Hrishis, who took shelter in his Ashram on account of the famine. The blessings of the group of rishis increased the merit (Punya) of Gautama. Lord Indra's position became shaky because of his increased merit. So Indra ordered clouds to rain all over Trimbakeshwar, so that the famine will be over and rishis will go back and the increasing merits of Gautama will be weakened. Although the famine was over, Gautama urged the Rishis to stay back and kept on feeding them and gaining merit. Once he saw a cow grazing in the paddy field and he drove her away by throwing Darbha (sharp, pointed grass). The slender cow died by this. It was Jaya - Parvati's friend, who had taken the form of a cow. This news upset the Rishis and they refused to luncheon at his Ashram. Gautama requested Rishis to show a way out of this sin. He was advised to approach Lord Shiva and request him to release the Ganges and a bath in the Ganges would set him free of his sins. Gautama then practiced penance by going to the peak of Brahmagiri for 1000 years. Lord Shankara was pleased by his worships and gave him the Ganges.

However, Ganges was not prepared to part with Lord Shiv, which irritated him. He made TandavNrutya (dance) on the peak of Brahmagiri and dashed his *jata* there. Frightened by this action, Ganges appeared on Brahmagiri. Later on, Ganges appeared in the Trimbak Tirtha. Gautama praised her but she off and on appeared on the mountain at various places and disappeared in anger. Gautama could not bathe in her waters. The Ganges then appeared in Gangadwar, Varaha-tirtha, Rama-Laxman tirtha, Ganga Sagar tirtha. Still, Gautama could not bathe in her waters. The Gautama surrounded the river with enchanted grass and put a vow to her. The flow stopped there and the tirtha thus came to be called Kushavarta. It is

from this Kushavarta that the river Godavari flows up to the sea. The sin of killing a cow by Gautama was wiped off here.

This place is famous for its many religious rituals (vidhis). Narayan Nagbali, Kalsarpa Shanti, Tripindi Vidhi are done here. Narayan Nagbali puja is performed at Trimbakeshwar only. This puja is performed in three days. This puja is performed on special dates. Some days are not suitable to perform this puja. This puja is performed for many reasons like to cure an illness, going through bad times, killing a Cobra (Nag), childless couples, financial crisis or you want to perform some religious puja to have everything.

Trimbakeshwar town has a large number of Brahmin households and is also a centre for Vedic Gurukuls (kind of boarding school). It also has ashrams and Muths devoted to Ashtanga Yoga, the Hindu art of living.

The existing temple was built out of basalt after it was commissioned by Peshwa Nanasaheb. It so happens that the Peshwa made a bet on whether the stone surrounding the Jyotirlinga, is hollow from the inside or not. The stone was proved to be hollow, and on losing the bet, the Peshwa built a marvelous temple out of it.

The Shiva deity of the temple consisted of the world-famous Nassak Diamond. It was looted by the British in The Third Anglo-Maratha War and lies with one owner or the other ever since. The diamond presently lies with Edward J. Hand, a trucking firm executive from Greenwich, Connecticut, USA

The place is known for its scenic beauty in rainy/monsoon season and is surrounded by lush green hills untouched by pollution. Anjaneri mountain, the birthplace of Lord Hanuman, is 7 km from Trimbakeshwar.

**Shri Nilambika/Dattatreya/Matamba Temple:**

This temple is on top of the Neel mountain. All goddesses ('Matamba', 'Renuka', 'Mananmba') came here to see 'Parashuram' when he was performing penance (tapas). After his penance, he requested all goddesses to stay there and the temple was formed for these goddesses.

Akhil Bhartiya Shree Swami Samarth Gurupeeth, Trimbakeshwar Temple of Shri Swami Samarth Maharaj. This temple is 1 km from Shiva Temple. This temple is a marvelous example of Vastu Shastra.

The Trimbakeshwar Shiva Temple is 30 kilometers on road from Nashik, and 157 kilometers from Thane. The best way to reach the temple is by road. The closest railway station is the Nashik Road Railway Station that is 39 kilometers by road.

Ref: https://www.artofliving.org/mahashivratri/triambakeshwar-jyotirlinga

Trimbakeshwar Jyotirlinga is only one of the 12 jyotirlingas in India that does not only honor Lord Shiva but the other two gods in the Holy Trinity - Lord Vishnu and Lord Brahma as well.

## Where is the Trimbakeshwar Jyotirlinga located?

Trimbakeshwar Shiva Temple is located in Trimbak, which is about 28 km from Nashik, Maharashtra, India. The Godavari River originates near Trimbak. There are three hills surrounding this temple – Brahmagiri, Nilagiri and Kalagiri.

## History of Trimbakeshwar Jyotirlinga:

This Shiva temple was built by Prime Minister of the Maratha Empire, Peshwa Balaji Baji Rao, also known as Nana Saheb, in the mid-18th century.

## Special features of Trimbakeshwar Shiva Temple:

The entire temple is built with black stone. The main feature of Trimbakeshwar Shiva Temple is that the jyotirlinga has three faces representing the gods - Shiva, Vishnu and Brahma. They all exist within the hollow space within the Shivalinga. Hence the name Trimbakeshwara (Three Lords). They are covered by a jewelled crown that is believed to date to the era of the Pandavas.

You will also find images of Rama, Krishna, Ganga, Parasurama and Kedarnath among others. There are also monasteries of saints in this temple.

The temple has a well called Amritavarshini. It also has a Kushavarta or sacred pond, which is believed to be the source of the Godavari.

## What is the story behind Trimbakeshwar Jyotirlinga?

It is said that Gautama rishi lived on the Brahmagiri hills along with his wife, Ahalya. While there was famine everywhere else on the land, inside the rishi's ashram, there were abundant food grains. This was because the gods had blessed him because of his steadfast devotion and regular prayers. The other rishis felt jealous of him and sent a cow into his fields.

When Gautama tried to frighten the cow away from his fields, it died. For the sin of killing a cow, Gautama worshipped Lord Shiva to release the Ganga River and let her flow into his ashram to purify it. Pleased with his devotion, Lord Shiva released Ganga and told her to stay there. The Kushavarta or sacred pond that exists now is the source of the Godavari. (People worship the Godavari as Ganga.) The sage requested Lord Shiva also to make the site his abode, which the Lord did in the form of the jyotirlinga.

**Interesting facts about Trimbakeshwar Jyotirlinga:**

- In all the other sites of jyotirlingas, Lord Shiva is the main deity. This is the only place that also honors Lord Vishnu and Lord Brahma.
- The famous pilgrimage festival, Kumbh Mela, occurs here once every 12 years.
- Devotees believe that a visit to this temple will wash away their sins.

**From Ref:** https://www.india.com/travel/articles/maha-shivratri-2018-interesting-facts-about-trimbakeshwar-jyotirlinga-temple-3226870/

Let's have a look at some interesting facts about the temple.

**Here are some interesting facts about Trimbakeshwar temple dedicated to Lord Shiva.**

1. Trimbakeshwar temple is called jyotirlinga temple as it is one of the twelve jyotirlingas of Lord Shiva.

2. It is located near Nashik (30 km away) and is visited by a large number of devotees. It is also located close to the pilgrim spot of Shirdi Sai Baba which is a prominent destination in Maharashtra for Sai Baba devotees.

3. The town of Trimbakeshwar is named after the temple. The actual name of the town Trimbak. It is the venue for the Simhasta Kumbh Mela which is held over here once in every 12 years.

4. What's unique about the jyotirlinga at Trimbakeshwar temple is that it has three faces that symbolize Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva respectively.

5. The temple is also a brilliant piece of architecture with marvelously carved pillars and intricate floral designs on its inner walls.

**Links to Youtube videos:**

1. **Trimbakeshwar Shiva temple:**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=06WRGPu_790

2. **History and significance of Trimbakeshwar temple:**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nCRupK4lRy8

3. **Aerial view:**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7pPhBPxD3N8

4. **Trimbakeshwar Shiva temple:**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HCQw9-sxtN0

5. **Trimbakeshwar darshan:**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H9N7mp5gywk

# 11. **Kedarnath Jyotirlinga Temple**

**Ref: Wikipedia:**

**Kedarnath Temple** (Sanskrit:**केदारनाथ मंदिर**, IAST:*Kēdāranātha Mandira*, lit. 'temple of the lord of the field'), is a Hindu temple (shrine) dedicated to Shiva. Located on the Garhwal Himalayan range near the Mandakini river, Kedarnath is located in the state of Uttarakhand, India. Due to extreme weather conditions, the temple is open to the general public only between the months of April (Akshaya Tritiya) and November (Kartik Purnima, the autumn full moon). During the winters, the vigraha (deity) from Kedarnath temple is carried down to Ukhimath and where the deity is worshiped for the next six months.

Kedarnath is seen as a homogenous form of Shiva, the 'Lord of Kedarkhand', the historical name of the region.[1]

The temple is not directly accessible by road and has to be reached by a 22 kilometres (14 mi) uphill trek from Gaurikund. Pony and *manchan* service is available to reach the structure. According to Hindu legends, the temple was initially built by Pandavas, and is one of the twelve Jyotirlingas, the holiest Hindu shrines of Shiva.[2] Pandavas were supposed to have pleased Shiva by doing penance in Kedarnath.[3][2] The temple is one of the four major sites in India's Chota Char Dham pilgrimage of Northern Himalayas. This temple is the highest among the 12 Jyotirlingas.[4] Kedarnath was the worst affected area during the 2013 flash floods in North India. The temple complex, surrounding areas, and Kedarnath town suffered extensive damage, but the temple structure did not suffer any "major" damage, apart from a few cracks on one side of the four walls which was caused by the flowing debris from the higher mountains. A large rock among the debris acted as a barrier, protecting the temple from the flood. The surrounding premises and other buildings in the market area were heavily damaged.[5][6]

It is one of the 275 Paadal Petra Sthalams, expounded in *Tevaram*, a sacred Tamil Shaivite text written during 6th and 7th century by various saints called Nayanars. This temple is sung by Thirugnanasambandar and Sundarar in their Tevaram texts.

**History and legends of origin**:

The temple, at a height of 3,583 m (11,755 ft), 223 km (139 mi) from Rishikesh, on the shores of Mandakini river, a tributary of Ganga, is a stone edifice of unknown date.[7] It is not certain who built the original Kedarnath temple and when. The name "Kedarnath" means "the lord of the field": it derives from the Sanskrit words *kedara* ("field") and *natha* ("lord"). The text *Kashi Kedara Mahatmya* states that it is so called because "the crop of liberation" grows here.[8]

According to a theological account, the god Shiva agreed to dwell here at the request of Nara-Narayana.[8] After the Kurukshetra War, the Pandava brothers, came here to meet Shiva on the advice of the sage Vyasa, because they wanted to seek forgiveness for killing their kin during the war. However, Shiva did not want to forgive them: so, he turned into a bull and hid among the cattle on the hill. When the Pandavas managed to track him, he tried to disappear by sinking himself head-first into the ground. One of the brothers, Bhima, grabbed his tail, forcing him to appear before them and forgive them. The Pandava brothers then built the first temple at Kedarnath. The portions of Shiva's body later appeared at four other locations; and collectively, these five places came to be known as the five Kedaras ("Panch Kedar"); the head of the bull appeared at the location of Pashupatinath.[3][2]

The *Mahabharata*, which gives the account of the Pandavas and the Kurukshetra War, does not mention any place called Kedarnath. One of the earliest references to Kedarnath occurs in the *Skanda Purana* (c. 7th-8th century), which contains a story describing the origin of the Ganges river. The text names Kedara (Kedarnath) as the place where Shiva released the holy water from his matted hair.[9]

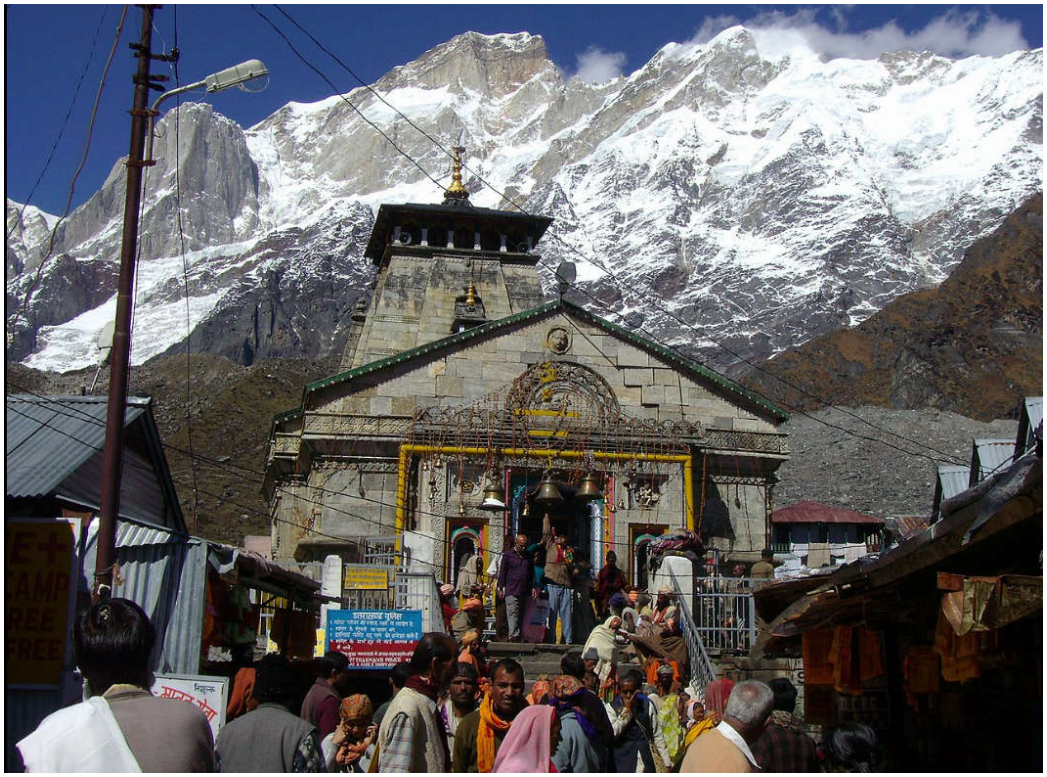
According to the hagiographies based on Madhava's *Sankshepa-shankara-vijaya*, the 8th century philosopher Adi Shankara died at Kedaranatha (Kedarnath); although other hagiographies, based on Anandagiri's *Prachina-Shankara-Vijaya*, state that he died at Kanchi. The ruins of a monument marking the purported death place of Shankara are located at Kedarnath.[10] Kedarnath was definitely a prominent pilgrimage centre by the 12th century, when it is mentioned in *Kritya-kalpataru* written by the Gahadavala minister Bhatta Lakshmidhara.[11]

According to a tradition recorded by the English mountaineer Eric Shipton (1926), "many hundreds of years ago", the Kedarnath temple did not have a local priest: the priest of the Badrinath temple used to hold services at both the temples, travelling between the two places daily.[12]

## Yamunotri:

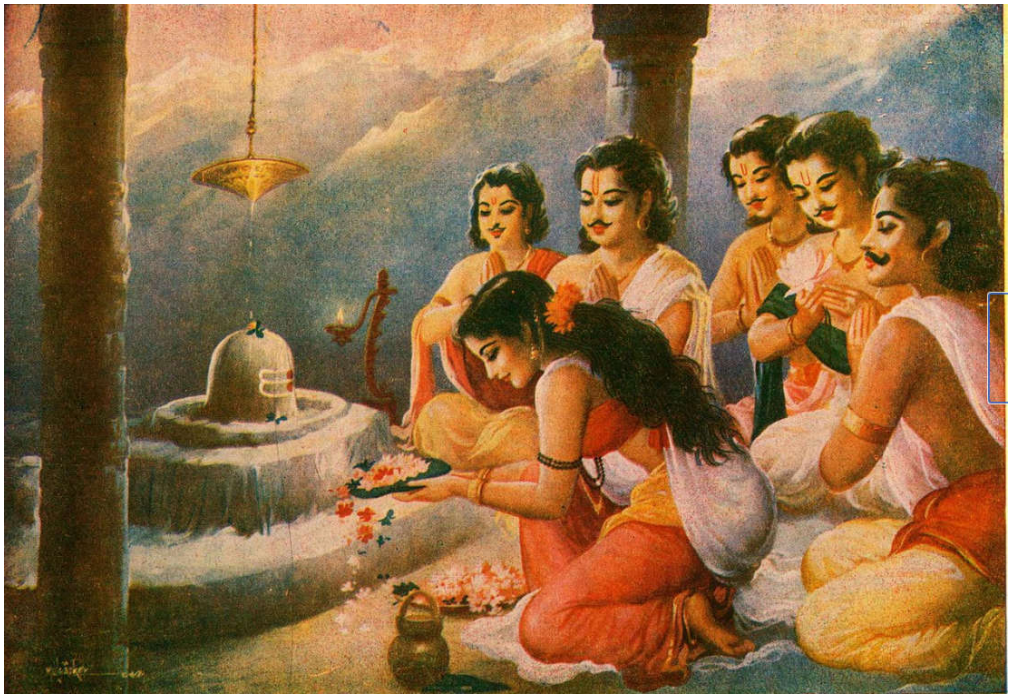
## Gangotri:

## Kedarnath:



## Badrinath:

## Pandavas visit Kedarnath after Kurukshetra war:



## Five Temples:

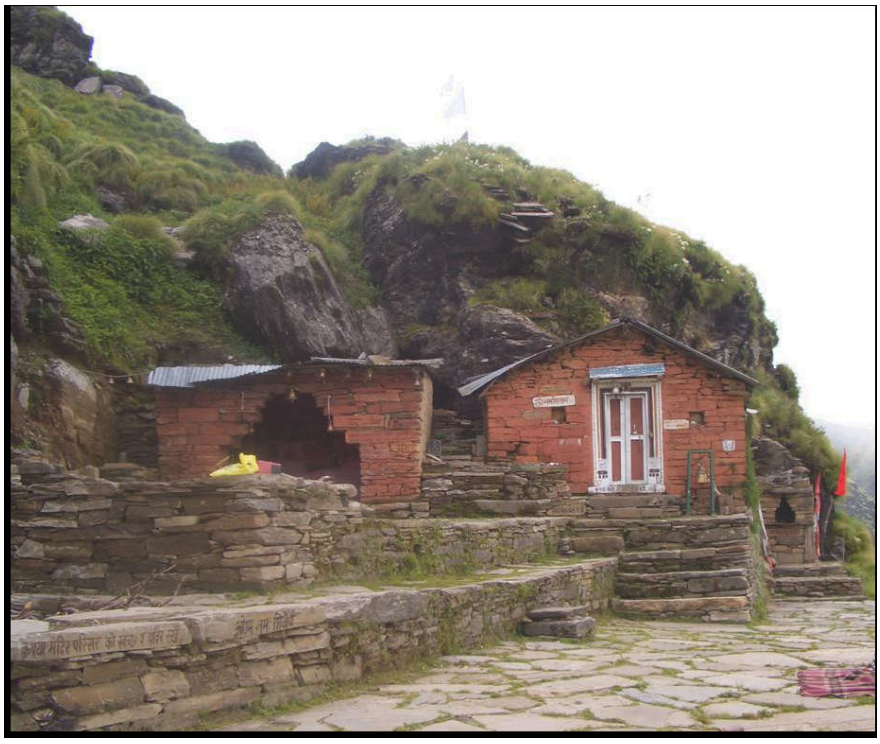
The presiding image of Kedarnath in the form of lingam is of irregular shape with a pedestal 3.6 m (12 ft) in circumference and 3.6 m (12 ft) in height. There is a small pillared hall in front of the temple, that has images of Parvathi and of the five Pandava princes. There are five temples around namely Badari-kedar, Madhya Maheswara, Tunganatha, Rudranatha and Kallesvara.[13] The first hall inside Kedarnath Temple contains statues of the five Pandava brothers, Krishna, Nandi, the vehicle of Shiva and Virabhadra, one of the guards of Shiva. Statue of Draupadi and other deities are also installed in the main hall.[1] An unusual feature of the temple is the head of a man carved in the triangular stone fascia. Such a head is seen carved in another temple nearby constructed on the site where the marriage of Shiva and Parvati was held. Adi Shankara was believed to have revived this temple, along with Badrinath and other temples of Uttarakhand; he is believed to have attained Mahasamadhi at Kedaranath. Behind the temple is the samādhi mandir of Adi Sankara.[14]

The head priest (*Raval*) of the Kedarnath temple belongs to the Veerashaiva community from Karnataka.[15] However, unlike in Badrinath temple, the Raval of Kedarnath temple does not perform the pujas. The pujas are carried out by Raval's assistants on his instructions. The Raval moves with the deity to Ukhimath during the winter season. There are five main priests for the temple, and they become head priests for one year by rotation. The present (2013) Raval of Kedarnath temple is Shri Vageesha Lingacharya.[15] Shri Vageesh Lingacharya who belongs to the Village Banuvalli of Taluka Harihar of Davanagere district in Karnataka. A triangular shaped lingam is worshiped in Garbhagriha of the temple. Surrounding Kedarnath, there are many symbols of the Pandavas. Raja Pandu died at Pandukeshwar. The tribals here perform a dance called "Pandav Lila".[16] The mountain top where the Pandavas went to Swarga, is known as "Swargarohini", which is located off Badrinath. When Dharmarāja was leaving for Swarga, one of his fingers fell on the earth. At that place, Dharmarāja installed a Shiva Linga, which is the size of the thumb. To gain Mashisharupa, Shankara and Bheema fought with maces. Bheema was struck with remorse. He started to massage Shankara's body with ghee. In memory of this event, even today, this triangular Shiva JyotirLinga is massaged with ghee. Water and Bel leaves are used for worship.

## Kedarnath:

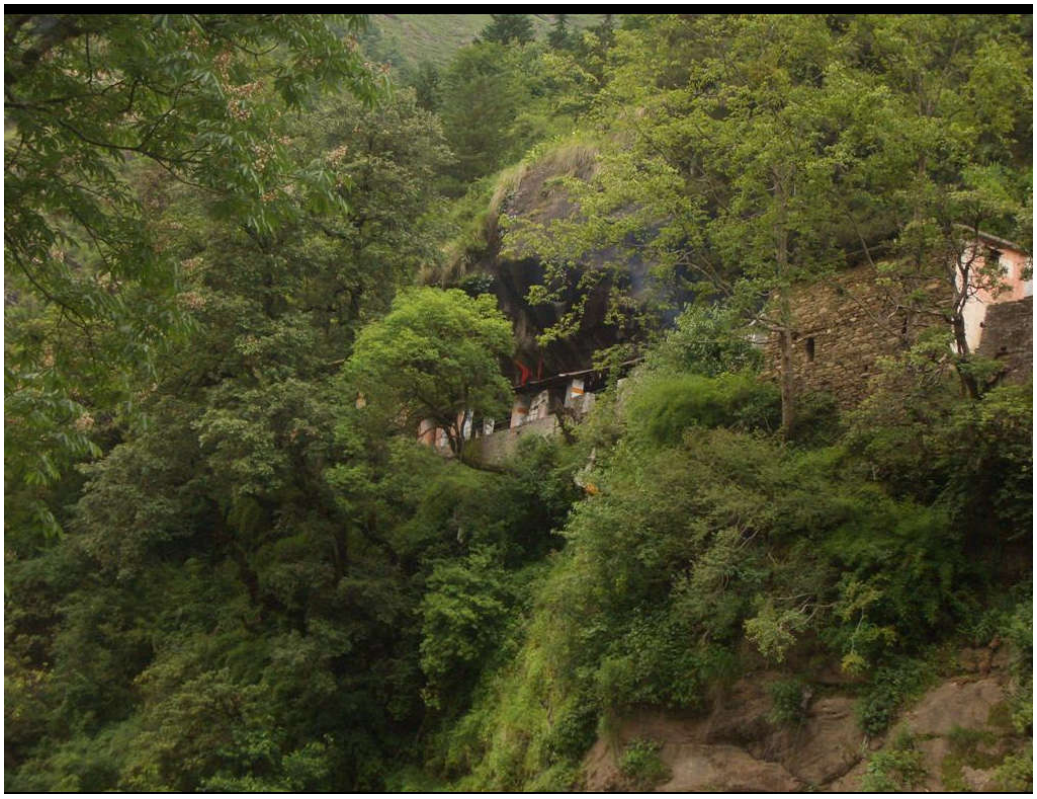
## Tunganath:

## Rudranath:



## Madhyamaheshwar:

## Kalpeshwar:



## Way to Kedarnath temple in early winter:

### 2013 Kedarnath disaster:

The Kedarnath valley, along with other parts of the state of Uttarakhand, was hit with unprecedented flash floods on 16 and 17 June 2013. On 16 June, at about 7:30 p.m. a landslide and mudslides occurred near Kedarnath Temple with loud peals of thunder. An enormously loud peal was heard and huge amounts of water started gushing from Chorabari Tal or Gandhi Tal down Mandakini river at about 8:30 p.m. washing everything away in its path. On 17 June 2013 at about 6:40 a.m. in the morning waters again started cascading at a huge speed from river Swaraswati and Chorabari Tal or Gandhi Tal bringing along with its flow huge amount of silt, rocks, and boulders. A huge rock got stuck behind Kedarnath Temple and protected it from the ravages of the flood. The waters gushed on both the sides of the temple destroying everything in their path. Even eyewitness observed that one large rock got carried to the rear side of Kedarnath Temple, thus causing obstruction to the debris, diverting the flow of river and debris to the sides of the temple avoiding damage.

Another theory for the temple not being destroyed is because of its construction.[21][22][23][24] Although the temple withstood the severity of the floods, the complex and surrounding area were destroyed, resulting in the death of hundreds of pilgrims and locals. Shops and hotels in Kedarnath were destroyed and all roads were broken. People took shelter inside the temple for several hours, until the Indian Army airlifted them to safer places.[15] The Uttarakhand Chief Minister announced that the Kedarnath shrine would remain closed for a year for clearing the debris.

The experts, who were asked by the Archaeological Survey of India to examine the condition of the foundation in wake of the floods have arrived at the conclusion that there was no danger to the temple. The IIT Madras experts visited the temple thrice for the purpose. Non-destructive testing instruments that do not disturb the structure of the temple were used by the IIT-team for assessing the health of the structure, foundation, and walls. They have submitted their interim report that the temple is stable and there was no major danger.[25][26][27]

Nehru Institute of Mountaineering (NIM) was given the responsibility of Rebuilding Kedarnath. Although the institute did not have the expertise in urban planning or construction, they mastered in high altitude training. Under the leadership of veteran mountaineer, Colonel Ajay Kothiyal, NIM rigorously worked for a year and made the pilgrimage yatra possible from the next year.

Rear view of the Kedarnath Temple in the aftermath of the flood

Front view of the Kedarnath Temple in the aftermath of the flood

Kedarnath Temple at night

1880s photo of Kedarnath temple

Kedarnath Temple is one of the 12 Jyotirlingas

**Ref: https://www.artofliving.org/mahashivratri/kedarnath-jyotirlinga**

*Kedarnath* means 'Lord of the field or Kedar Khand' region, the historical name of the region. Set amid scenic snowy mountains and valleys covered with grassy meadows, the Kedarnath temple is on the must-see list of sightseers all over the world – not just pilgrims.

Kedarnath is one of the four major pilgrimage sites – the Chota Char Dam, along with Gangotri, Yamunotri and Badrinath - that devotees have on their bucket list of places to visit.

### Where is the Kedarnath Jyotirlinga located?

Situated at an altitude of over 3,500 m above sea level in Uttarakhand, this temple is the highest of the 12 *jyotirlingas* in India. It is located at the head of the Mandakini and mythical Saraswati River in Garhwal Himalayas.

### History of Kedarnath Jyotirlinga:

One of the first references of Kedarnath is in the *Skanda Purana* that was written around the 7th and 8th century AD. The present structure is believed to have been constructed by Adi Shankaracharya about 1,200 years ago. It stands next to the site of a temple that is said to have been built by the Pandavas.

It has been renovated many times over the centuries.

### Special features of Kedarnath Temple:

The temple is built with huge stone slabs over a rectangular platform. There are inscriptions in Pali on the steps. There are figures of various deities and scenes from Hindu mythology on the inner walls. A large statue of the Nandi Bull, Shiva's mount, stands as guard at the entrance.

The *jyotirlinga* is in the shape of a conical rock formation inside the temple - Lord Shiva in his Sadashiva form.

### What is the story behind Kedarnath Jyotirlinga?

The legend behind this famous place of worship is that after the Mahabharata war, the Pandavas performed a penance to purge their sins – of killing their kin. In

order to be able to do this, they were advised to seek Lord Shiva's pardon. They searched high and low and finally, saw Lord Shiva at the spot where the *jyotirlinga* in Kedarnath is situated today.

It is said that Lord Shiva was not willing to forgive the Pandavas for their deceit and sins during the war and hence hid himself from them. He disguised himself as a bull and disappeared into the ground.

The second Pandava, Bhimasena, tried to pull him out of the ground by tugging at his tail and hind legs. However, Lord Shiva dug himself deeper and only reappeared in parts in different places - the hump in Kedarnath, the arms in Tunganath, the navel and stomach in Madhyamaheshwar, the face in Rudranath, and the hair and head in Kalpeshwar.

The Pandavas built temples at these five places – the Panch Kedars - for worshipping Shiva. This freed them from their sins.

Lord Shiva further promised to stay on in the sacred spot as a triangular *jyotirlinga*. This is why Kedarnath is so famous and revered by devotees.

**Interesting facts about Kedarnath Jyotirlinga:**

- Since Kedarnath is located at such an altitude, winters are severe, making the temple inaccessible. So, it is open to the public only between April and November. It closes on the first day of Kartik (October-November) and opens in Vaisakh (April-May) every year. During the winters, the *murtis* (idols) from Kedarnath temple are brought to Ukhimath and worshiped there for six months.
- In the 2013 floods, while adjacent areas were severely damaged, the Kedarnath temple itself was not affected.
- Kedarnath is the first of the Panch Kedars.

Considered one of the holiest temples for Lord Shiva, pilgrims devotedly visit this mountainous temple every year. While the main Kedarnath temple is normally closed during Mahashivratri celebrations, the Badri-Kedar festival is celebrated over a week in June every year.

**Links to videos:**

**Shivratri Special Kedarnath Temple Darshan:**
https://youtu.be/GGPmyzlQNwI

**Complete Guide for Kedarnath Dham:**
https://youtu.be/hWr2e0vQaLA

**Kedarnath Yatra Mahashivratri 2021 special:**

**https://youtu.be/ixlZp9Sbflw**

**Shivratri Special Kedarnath Temple Darshan:**
https://youtu.be/waYsMoE7Bfs

**KEDARNATH DHAM / MAHA SHIVRATRI SPECIAL 2021:**
https://youtu.be/9-DDoj2TjsU

Watch "**केदारनाथ को क्यों कहते हैं जागृत महादेव? भक्त और शिव जी की सत्य कथा|**
**Lord Shiva Story of Kedarnath:**

https://youtu.be/gtDb7NP7nLM

## 12. Grishneshwar Jyotirlinga temple

**Ref: Wikipedia:**

**Grishneshwar Jyotirlinga Temple**, sometimes referred to as the **Ghrneshwar** or **Ghushmeshwar Temple**, is one of the shrines dedicated to Lord Shiva that is referenced in the Shiva Purana.[2][3] The word *Ghrneshwara* means "lord of compassion".[2] The temple is an important pilgrimage site in the Shaiva tradition of Hinduism, which considers it as the last or twelfth Jyotirlinga (linga of light).[4] This pilgrimage site is located in Ellora (also

called Verul), less than a kilometer from Ellora Caves – a UNESCO World Heritage site. It is about 30 kilometres (19 miles) north-west of the city of Aurangabad, and about 300 kilometres (190 miles) east-northeast from Mumbai.

The temple structure was destroyed by the Delhi Sultanate in 13th and 14th-century. The temple went through several rounds of rebuilding followed by re-destruction during the Mughal-Maratha conflict. It was rebuilt in the current form in the 18th century under the sponsorship of queen Ahilyabai Holkar of Indore, after the fall of the Mughal Empire.[4] It is presently an important and active pilgrimage site of the Hindus and attracts long lines of devotees daily. Anyone can enter the temple premises and its inner chambers, but to enter the sanctum sanctorum core (garbha-ghrya) of the temple, the local Hindu tradition demands that men must go bare-chested.[2]

**Grishneshwar Shiva temple is next to the Ellora Caves.**

The Grishneswar temple is an illustration of maratha temple architectural style and structure. The temple, built of red rocks, is composed of a five-tier *shikara*. The temple was re-constructed by Maloji Bhosale of Verul, (grandfather of Shivaji) in the 16th century and later again by queen Ahilyabai Holkar in the 18th century. She is credited with rebuilding some of major Hindu temples such as the Kashi Vishvanath temple in Varanasi, a Vishnu temple in Gaya, and a much larger Shiva Jyotirlinga temple in Somnath Temple.[5]

This 240 ft x 185 ft temple is the smallest Jyotirlinga temple in India. Halfway up the temple, Dashavataras of Vishnu are carved in red stone. A court hall is built on 24 pillars. On these pillars, there are carvings summarizing various legends and mythologies of Shiva. The Garbhagriha measures 17 ft x 17 ft. The Lingamurty faces eastward. There is a Nandi bull in the court hall. Ghrishneshwar Temple is a revered temple, situated in the state of Maharashtra. The temple houses carvings and sculptures of many Hindu gods and goddesses.

**Ref: https://www.artofliving.org/mahashivratri/ghrishneshwar-jyotirlinga**

*Grishneshwar* means 'Lord of compassion'.

### Where is the Grishneshwar Jyotirlinga located?

It is located in Ellora near Daulatabad in Maharashtra, India.

### History of Grishneshwar Jyotirlinga:

This temple has been mentioned in the *Shiva Purana* and *Padma Purana.*

The site was destroyed by the Delhi Sultanate in the 13th-14th century AD. The temple was reconstructed by Maratha ruler Shivaji's grandfather, Maloju Bhisale of Verul, in the 16th century AD.

The current structure was built by Queen Ahilyabai Holkar of Indore in the 18th century AD after the fall of the Mughal Empire.

### Special features of Grishneshwar Temple:

The temple, built of red rocks, is composed of a five-tier spire or shikara. You can see the Dashavatars (ten avatars) of Lord Vishnu carved in red stone.

There is a court hall built on 24 pillars on which you will find carvings of various legends and mythologies of Lord Shiva. The sanctum houses the east-facing linga. You will also find a statue of Lord Shiva's mount, Nandi, the bull in the court hall.

## What is the story behind Grishneshwar Jyotirlinga?

**There are a couple of legends associated with this jyotirlinga.**

**One legend** says that there was once a woman named Kusuma, who would worship Lord Shiva every day, immersing the Shiva Linga in a tank along with her prayers. Her husband's first wife was jealous of her devotion and murdered her son.

Although Kusuma was grief-stricken, she kept up her faith and her devotion to the Lord. It is said that Lord Shiva was so pleased with her devotion that he brought her son back to life. Kusuma requested the Lord to stay on, which is why Lord Shiva manifested himself as a jyotirlinga here.

**Another legend** has it that there was a Brahmin called Brahmavetta Sudharm, who lived with his wife Sudeha in the Devagiri mountains. The couple was childless, so Sudeha got her sister Ghushma married to her husband. On her sister's advice, Ghushma would make lingas, worship them, and immerse them in the lake nearby. She was, finally, blessed with a baby boy. Over time, Sudeha became jealous of her sister and murdered her son and threw him into the very lake where her sister would immerse the lingas.

Though Ghushma's daughter-in-law told her that Sudeha had a hand in the murder of her son, Ghushma continued her daily rituals believing totally in the Lord's mercy. And true to her beliefs, as she went to immerse the linga, she saw her son walking towards her. Lord Shiva appeared before her and told her of her sister's heinous deed.

Ghushma requested the Lord to forgive her sister. Pleased, the Lord granted her a boon. She asked him to stay on in that place, which is why he manifested himself as a jyotirlinga called Ghushmeshwar. The lake in which Ghushma immersed the lingas was called Shivalaya.

## Interesting facts about Grishneshwar Jyotirlinga

- Grishneshwar is also called Ghushmeshwar and Kusumeshwar.

- Men are required to go bare-chested into the temple.
- This is the smallest jyotirlinga temple in India.
- The UNESCO World Heritage site, Ellora caves, is less than a kilometer away.

Ref: https://www.mahashivratri.org/grishneshwar-temple-daulatabad.html

## Grishneshwar Temple

Grishneshwar Temple is an ancient pilgrimage site revered as the abode of one of the 12 Jyotirlinga manifestation of Lord Shiva. The Grishneshwar Jyotirlinga shrine is located at a village called Verul, which lies 20 km from Daulatabad (near Aurangabad in Maharashtra) and approximately 100 kms from Manmad station. Located close to Daulatabad (once known as Devagiri) is the popular tourist attractions Ajanta - Ellora.

The Grishneswar Temple was constructed by Ahilyabhai Holkar who also re-constructed the Kashi Viswanatha Temple at Varanasi and the Vishnu Paada Temple at Gaya. The Grishneshwar Temple is also known by several other names like Kusumeswarar, Ghushmeswara, Grushmeswara and Grishneswara.

## Legend Behind Grishneshwar Temple

According to Shivapuran, in the southern direction, on a mountain named Devagiri lived a Brahmin called Brahmavetta Sudharm along with his wife Sudeha. The couple did not have a child because of which Sudeha was sad. Sudeha prayed and tried all possible remedies but in vain. Frustrated of being childless, Sudeha got her sister Ghushma married to her husband. On the advice of her sister, Ghushma used to make 101 lingas, worship them and discharge them in the near by lake.

With the blessings of Lord Shiva, Ghushma gave birth to a baby boy. Because of this, Ghushma became proud and Sudeha started feeling jealous towards her sister. Out of jealously, one night she killed Ghushma's son and threw him in the lake where Ghushma used to discharge the lingas.

Next morning, Ghushmas and Sudharm got involved in daily prayers and ablutions. Sudeha too, got up and started performing her daily choirs. Ghushma's daughter-in-law, however, saw stains of blood on her husband's bed and parts of the body drenched in blood. Horrified, she narrated everything to mother-in-law Ghushma who was absorbed in worshipping Shiva. Ghushma did not deter. Even her husband Sudharma did not move an inch. Even when Ghushma saw the bed drenched in blood she did not break down and said he who has given me this child shall protect him and started reciting 'Shiva-Shiva'. Later, when she went to discharge the Shivalingas after prayers she saw her son coming. Seeing her son Ghushma was neither happy nor sad. At that time Lord Shiv appeared before her and said - I am pleased with your devotion. Your sister had killed your son. Ghushma told Lord to forgive Sudeh and emancipate her. Pleased with her generosity, Lord Shiva asked her another boon.

Ghushma said that if he was really happy with her devotion then he should reside here eternally for the benefit of the multitudes in form of a Jyotirling and may you be known by my name. On her request, Lord Shiva manifested himself in the form of a Jyotirling and assumed the name Ghushmeshwar and the lake was named as Shivalaya thereafter.

**Photos:**

Grishneshwar jyotirlinga temple ...

Grishneshwar Jyotirlinga, Daulatabad ...

Aurangabad Grishneshwar Jyotirlinga ...

Grishneshwar Jyotirlinga, Daulatabad ...

Grishneshwar Temple Verul Maharashtra

Grishneshwar Jyotirlinga Temple ...

Grishneshwar Jyotirlinga Temple ...

Grishneshwar Jyotirlinga Temple ...

Grishneshwar jyotirlinga of Lord Shiva ...

**Links to videos:**

**Mahashivarathri in Grishneshwar temple:**

**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mSnPnH6Ksic**

**Lord Grishneshwar temple, Verul:**

**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=--JI8VyEehY**

**Grishneshwar and Parli Jyotirlinga temples:**

**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X58TAFTaXCQ**

## APPENDIX-I

## 13. Pashupatinath Jyotirlinga temple

Pashupatinath Temple

**Ref: Wikipedia:**

The **Pashupatinath Temple** (Nepali: **पशुपतिनाथ मन्दिर**) is a famous and sacred Hindu temple complex that is located on the banks of the Bagmati River, approximately 5 km north-east of Kathmandu in the eastern part of Kathmandu Valley,[1] the capital of Nepal. The temple serves as the seat of Pashupatinath. This temple complex was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage Sites's list in

1979.[2][3] This "extensive Hindu temple precinct" is a "sprawling collection of temples, ashrams, images and inscriptions raised over the centuries along the banks of the sacred Bagmati river" and is included as one of the seven monument groups in UNESCO's designation of Kathmandu Valley.[4]

The temple is one of the 275 Tamil Paadal Petra Sthalams (*Holy Abodes of Shiva*) on the continent. Kotirudra Samhita, Chapter 11 on the Shivalingas of the North, in Shiva Purana mentions this Shivalinga as the bestower of all wishes.

**History:**

The absolute date of the Pashupatinath temple construction is still uncertain. However, the present form of this temple was constructed in 1692 A.D.[5] Over time, many more temples have been erected around this two-storied temple. These include the Vaishnava temple complex with a Rama temple from the 14th century and the Guhyeshwari Temple mentioned in an 11th-century manuscript.

**World Heritage Site, Pashupatinath Temple:**

**Pashupatinath Temple Panorama of the Pashupatinath Temple from the other bank of Bagmati river, Kathmandu, Nepal:**

**Pashupatinath area after a rain:**

**Legend surrounding the origin of the temple**:

Pashupatinath Temple is the oldest Hindu temple in Kathmandu. It is not known for certain when Pashupatinath Temple was built. But according to Nepal Mahatmaya and Himvatkhanda,[6] the deity here gained great fame there as Pashupati, the Lord of all Pashus, which are living as well as non-living beings. Pashupatinath Temple's existence dates back to 400 B.C.[*citation needed*] The richly ornamented pagoda houses the sacred linga or holy symbol of Lord Shiva. There are many legends describing as to how the temple of Lord Aalok Pashupatinath came to existence here. Some of them are narrated below.

**The Cow Legend**:

Legend says that Lord Shiva and Parvati once took the form of an antelope and sported unknown in the forest on the Bagmati river's east bank. The gods later caught up with him and grabbing him by one of his horns, forced him to resume his divine form. The broken horn was worshipped as a Sivalinga but over time it was buried and lost. Centuries later astonished herdsmen found one of his cows showering the earth with milk. Digging deep at the site, he discovered the divine linga of Pashupatinath.

**The Licchavi Legend**:

According to Gopalraj Aalok Vamsavali, the oldest ever chronicle in Nepal, this temple was built by Prachanda Deva, a Licchavi King, who according to the stone inscription erected by Jayadeva 11 in the courtyard of Pashupatinath in 753 AD, happened to be the ruler 39 generations before Manadeva (464-505 AD).

**The Devalaya Legend:**

Another chronicle states that Pashupatinath Temple was in the form of Linga shaped Devalaya before Supuspa Deva constructed a five-storey temple of Pashupatinath in this place. As the time passed, the need for repairing and renovating this temple arose. It is learnt that this temple was reconstructed by a medieval King named Shivadeva (1099-1126 AD). It was renovated by Ananta Malla adding a roof to it.[7][8] Thousands of pilgrims from all over the world come to pay homage to this temple, that is also known as 'The Temple of Living Beings'.

**Other beliefs:**

There are several complex stories involving the origins of Pashupatinath. One story goes, in brief, that Shiva and Parvati came to the Kathmandu Valley and rested by the Bagmati while on a journey. Shiva was so impressed by its beauty and the surrounding forest that he and Parvati changed themselves into deer and walked into the forest. Many spots in the Kathmandu Valley have been identified as places where Shiva went during his time as a deer. After a while, the people and gods began to search for Shiva. Finally, after various complications, they found him in the forest, but he refused to leave. More complications ensued, but ultimately Lord Shiva announced that, since he had lived by the Bagmati river in a deer's form, he would now be known as Pashupatinath, Lord of all animals. It is said that whoever came here and beheld the lingam that appeared there would not be reborn as an animal.

**Finding of Shiva Linga at Pashupatinath Temple**:

It is said that the wish-fulfilling cow Kamadhenu took shelter in a cave on the Chandravan mountain. Everyday Kamadhenu went down to the place where the lingam was sunken into the soil and poured her milk on top of the soil. After a few thousand years some people saw Kamadhenu pouring milk on that same spot every day, and started to wonder what that would be. So they removed the soil and found the beautiful shining lingam and started worshiping it.

**Temple complex:**

The area of Pashupatinath encompasses 0.64 hectares of land including 518 temples and monuments.[2] Main pagoda style temple is located in the fortified courtyard within the complex guarded by Nepal Police and Nepal Army and has a police outpost along with living quarter within. In front of the western door, there is a huge statue Nandi bull, in bronze. Along with many temples and shrines of both Vaishnav and saiva tradition.

**Temples and Shrines in the inner courtyard**:

- Vasuki Nath Temple
- Unmatta Bhairava Temple
- Surya Narayana Temple
- Kirtimukha Bhairava shrine
- Budhanilakantha shrine
- Hanuman shrine
- 184 Sivalinga shrine

**Temples and Shrines in the outer complex**:

- Ram Temple
- Virat swaroop temple
- 12 jyotirlingha and Pandra Shivalaya
- Guhyeshwari Temple

**Pashupati temple surroundings:**

The temple has a policy of charging white people entry and barring white people from certain sites even if the white person is a Hindu.

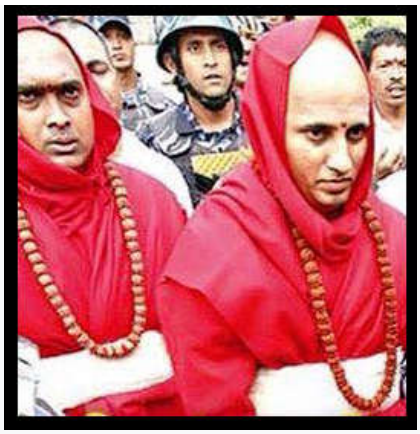
**Main temple architecture:**

This main temple is built in the Nepalese pagoda style of architecture. All the features of pagoda style are found here like cubic constructions, beautifully carved wooden rafters on which they rest (tundal). The two level roofs are of copper with gold covering. The temple resides on a square base platform with a height of 23m 7 cm from base to pinnacle. It has four main doors, all covered with silver sheets. This temple has a gold pinnacle (Gajur). Inside are two Garbhagrihas, outer and inner. The inner garbhagriha or sanctum sanctorum is where the idol is placed and outer sanctum is an open corridor-like space.

**The deity:**

The sacro sanctum, or the main idol is a stone Mukhalinga with a silver yoni base bound with the silver serpent. The lingam is one metre high and has faces in four directions. These faces represent various aspects of Shiva; Sadyojata (also known as Barun), Vamadeva (also known as Ardhanareshwara), Tatpurusha, Aghora & Ishana (imaginative). Facing West, North, East, South and Zenith respectively representing five primary elements namely earth, water, air, light and ether.[9] Each face has tiny protruding hands holding rudraksha mala on right hand and a kamandalu on the other. Unlike other Shiva lingams in India and Nepal this Pashupati Shiva lingam is always Dressed in its golden vastram except during abhisheka, so pouring milk and Ganga Jal is only possible during abhisheka through the main priests.

**Priest:**



**Raghavendra Bhat (right) and Girish Bhatt in traditional 4-5 kg heavy Priestly garb of Pashupatinath Temple**

The unique feature of this temple is that only 4 priests can touch the idol. Daily rituals of Pashupatinath are carried out by two sets of priests; one being the Bhatt priests and other Bhandari. Bhatta or Bhatt are the one who performs the daily ritual and can touch the lingam, whereas Bhandaris are the helper and temple caretaker priests who are not qualified to perform pooja rituals or to touch the deity.

**Bhatta**:

Bhatta also spelt as *Bhat* are highly educated Vedic Dravida Brahmin Scholars from Karnataka. Unlike other Hindu temples, priesthood of Pashupatinath is not hereditary. Priests are selected from a group of scholars educated by Shri Shankaracharya Dakshinamnaya Peeth Sringeri on Rig Vedic Recitation, initiated in Pashupata Yoga by Kashi Math, Shiva Āgama and learned Recitation of Samaveda from Haridwar. After qualifying and fulfilling all those criteria they are selected for Priesthood by Raj Guru of Pashupatinath Temple undergoing strict examination on Vedas and Shiva Agamas and then the chosen priest is sent to Kathmandu for performing Puja and Daily Worship of Lord Shri Pashupatinath .

The unique feature of this temple is that only 4 Bhatta priests can touch the deity. Current Bhatt priests of the temple are;

- Ganesh Bhat (15th head priest of the Pashupatinath Temple aka Mool Bhat) from Udupi.[10]
- Ram Karanth Bhat from Mangaluru.[10]
- Girish Bhat from Sirsi.[10]
- Narayan Bhat(Recently appointed) from Bhatkal[10]
- Raghavendra Bhat (Priest for Vasuki Nath temple only)

**Bhandaris**:

Also called Rajbhandari are the treasurers, temple caretakers, and assistant priest of the temple.[2] These Bhandaris are the descendants of helper priests brought up by early Bhatts, but were allowed to settle in Kathmandu valley and later assimilated in existing Newar caste of Rajbhandari - a high-caste Chathariya/Kshatriya clan of Kashyapa gotra. Their main function is to help the Bhatta priest and perform maintenance of the inner Garbhagriha. They can have little or no Vedic knowledge but still qualify as assistant priests if they belong from the same family lineage and undergo some basic criteria like caste, gotra, lineage purity, educational qualification, etc. They work in a set of three and change in every full moon day.[2] There are a total of 108 Bhandaris.

**Entry and Darshan**:

**The western entrance of main temple courtyard:**

**Pandra Shivalaya and ghat (viewpoint for tourist from adjacent side of river Bagmati, East of the main temple):**

The temple courtyard has 4 entrances in the cardinal directions. The western entrance is the main entrance to the temple courtyard and the remaining three entrances are open only during festivals. The temple security (Armed Police Force Nepal) and the Pashupatinath area development trust are selective regarding who is allowed entry into the inner courtyard. Practising Hindus of South Asian diaspora and Buddhists of Nepali and Tibetan diaspora are only allowed into Temple courtyard. Practising Hindus of Western descent are not allowed into the temple complex and must go no further than other, non-Hindu visitors. An exception is granted to Sikhs and Jains; if they are of Indian ancestry they may enter the temple complex. Others can look at the main temple from the adjacent side of the river[11] and have to pay a nominal fee of $10 (1000 Nepali rupees) for visiting the hundreds of small temples located in the external premises of the temple complex.

The inner temple courtyard remains open from 4 am to 7 pm for the devotee but the Inner Pashupatinath Temple where the Lingam of Lord Pashupatinath is

established is open from 5 am to 12 pm for the morning ritual and viewing and from 5 pm to 7 pm for the evening ritual. Unlike many other Saiva temples, devotees are not allowed to enter in the innermost Garbhagriha premises but are allowed to watch from the exterior premises of the outer Garbhagriha. The temple closing times change depends upon the season.In november ,it closes at 6.30pm.Going further,it closes early if light fades early.in summers ,they close at 8pm.

**Abhisheka**:

The inner sanctum where the Shiva Linga is placed, has four entrances: east, west, north, south. Normally devotees will have the Shiva Lingadarshan through western door entrance only. From 9:30 to 1:30 devotees can worship from all the 4 doors.

All the four doors are also opened during the Abhisheka time i.e. 9-11am. All the four sides of the Shiva Lingadarshan are possible during this period. One can take the abhisheka ticket at the SBI counter, available at the entrance of the temple. The basic abhisheka ticket costs around NPR.1100/-, which includes the Rudraabhisheka and various other poojas. Abhisheka will be done based on the direction the mukh is viewed. If your receipt says as eastern direction then one needs to stand in the queue at the eastern entrance, wherein the priests will do the abhisheka for the eastern mukh of the Shiva Linga.

**Festivals**:

There are many festivals throughout the year and thousands of people attend these festivals. The most important festivals are the Maha Shiva Ratri Bala Chaturthi festival, and Teej festival. Teej is one of the most celebrated festival at Pashupatinath Temple. It is celebrated by Hindu Nepali women for long life, happiness of their husband. It is believed that taking fasting at that day will make strong bond between the husband and wife. On this day, Pashupatinath Temple will be with biggest crowd.[12]

## Controversy of 2009:

In January 2009, after the forced resignation by the chief priest of Pashupatinath temple, the Maoist-led government of Nepal "hand picked" Nepalese priests of Khas-Gorkhali ethnicity to lead the temple, thus bypassing the temple's long-standing requirements.[13] This appointment was contested by the Bhandaris of the temple, stating that they were not against the appointment of Nepalese priests but against the appointment without proper procedure.[2][14] After the appointment was challenged in a civil court, the appointment was overruled by Supreme Court of Nepal.[15][16] However, the government did not heed the ruling and stood by its decision. This led to public outrage and protests over a lack of transparency. A clash between the youth wing of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), called YCL, and the protesters occurred leading to over a dozen injuries.[17] Lawmakers and activists from opposition parties joined protests, declaring their support for the Bhatta and other pro-Bhatta protesters.[18] After long dissatisfaction and protest by Hindus both in and outside Nepal, the government was forced to reverse its decision that had been declared illegal by the Supreme Court of Nepal and reinstate Bhatta priests.

## 2015 earthquake:

**One of the outer shrine damaged in 2015 Nepal earthquake:**

The main temple complex of Pashupatinath and the sanctum sanctorum was left untouched but some of the outer buildings in the World Heritage Site were damaged by the April 2015 Nepal earthquake.[19]

Ref: https://www.welcomenepal.com/places-to-see/pashupatinath.html

**PASHUPATINATH TEMPLE:**

Dedicated to Lord Shiva, Pashupatinath is one of the four most important religious sites in Asia for devotees of Shiva. Built in the 5th century and later renovated by Malla kings, the site itself is said to have existed from the beginning of the millennium when a Shiva *lingam* was discovered here.

The largest temple complex in Nepal, it stretches on both sides of the Bagmati River which is considered holy by Hindus. The main pagoda style temple has a gilded roof, four sides covered in silver, and exquisite wood carvings. Temples dedicated to several other Hindu and Buddhist deities surround the the temple of Pashupatinath.

Cremation of Hindus take place on raised platforms along the river. Only Hindus are allowed through the gates of the main temple. The inner sanctum has a Shiva *lingam* and facing the temple sits the largest statue of Nandi the bull, the vehicle of Shiva. There are hundreds of Shiva *lingams*within the compound. The big Maha Shivaratri festival in spring attracts hundreds of thousands of devotees from within Nepal and from India. Further east before the Bagmati reaches Pashupati is the temple of Guheshwori dedicated to Shiva's consort Sati Devi.

Visit Pashupatinath for an unmatched mix of religious, cultural and spiritual experiences. Located 3 km northwest of Kathmandu on the banks of the Bagmati River, the temple area also includes Deupatan, Jaya Bageshori, Gaurighat (Holy Bath), Kutumbahal, Gaushala, Pingalasthan and Sleshmantak forest. There are around 492 temples, 15 *Shivalayas* (shrines of Lord Shiva) and 12 *Jyotirlinga* (phallic shrines) to explore.

Pashupatinath Temple is one of the seven UNESCO Cultural Heritage Sites of the Kathmandu Valley. It is also a cremation site where the last rites of Hindus are performed. The rituals of cremation is not for the faint hearted; still visitors are seen watching curiously from across the river from the hillside. Visit Pashupatinath Temple for an out-of-this-world experience.

**Daily Rituals at Pashupatinath Temple:**

Pashupatinath is also one of the few living cultural heritage sites in the world. Unlike other cultural sites or museums, Pashupatinath is the centre of energy with active participation of people at all times of the day, every day. The daily rituals of Pashupatinath Temple are as follows:

- 4:00 am: West gate opens for visitors.
- 8:30 am: After arrival of Pujaris, the idols of the Lord are bathed and cleaned, clothes and jewelry are changed for the day.
- 9:30 am: Baal Bhog or breakfast is offered to the Lord.
- 10:00 am: Then people who want to do Puja are welcomed to do so. It is also called Farmayishi Puja, whereby people tell the Pujari to carry out a special Puja for specific reasons. The Puja continues till 1:45 pm in the afternoon.

- 1:50 pm: Lunch is offered to the Lord in the main Pashupati Temple.
- 2:00 pm: Morning prayers end.
- 5:15 pm: The evening Aarati at the main Pashupati Temple begins.
- 6:00 pm onward: In recent times the Bagmati Ganga Aarati that is done by the banks of the Bagmati has been gaining popularity. There are larger crowds attending on Saturdays, Mondays and on special occasions. Ganga Aarati along with Shiva's Tandava Bhajan, written by Ravana, is carried out during the evening Ganga Aarati.
- 7:00 pm: Doors close.

Apart from the daily rituals, special observed are plotted during special dates of the lunar calendar.

**PASHUPATINATH BAGMATI AARATI:**

One of the most mesmerizing rituals at Pashupatinath Temple is the **Pashupati Bagmati Aarati**. Bagmati is the holy river that flows through the temple. The river divides the temple into two sides, with the main Pashupatinath Temple being on one side and the location of this Aarati on the other.

Bagmati has great importance in Hindu religion. It is believed that taking a holy bath on this river washes away sins. Aarati is a ritual of worship in which light from wicks soaked in ghee (purified butter) is offered to God. Pashupati Bagmati Aarati follows three priests conducting the custom with oil lamps, lanterns and other religious elements by chanting sacred mantra.

The priests perform the Aarati by taking oil lamps and moving them in circular motion and dedicating their act to the Divine. Bhajan (songs with religious theme) are sung by devotees during the Aarati, creating blissful surrounding. The Aarati starts at 6 pm every evening. This is a ritual that allows everyone to be a part of it and creates an environment of union of God and the devotees.

The Bagmati Aarati started at Pashupati in the year 200. However, it was established as a regular tradition since the year 2006. Since then, this Aarati has been a regular practice captivating thousands of people every year.

In Hindu religion, Aarati has been given most value. A Bhajan is considered more valuable than a song; prayer is considered more sacred than Bhajan; and finally Aarati is considered most important of them all. Aarati is considered as the highest form of prayer.

The *Bagmati Aarati at Pashupatinath* offers reverence to the holy river Bagmati and the Pashupatinath Temple. A dance form called “Tandav” is performed by followers at the Aarati. Tandav is a divine dance performed by Load Shiva. Hence, followers dance Tandav during the Aarati paying respect to Lord Shiva.

The Bagmati Aarati is a major attraction and Pashupati is being widely recognized for it. Many people come to be a part of the Aarati during holidays, on Mondays and during festivals. Monday is considered the right day to worship Lord Shiva ensuring a large number of followers that day. Also, Aarati is a major attraction during Maha Shivaratri and Haritalika Teej festivals.

Hindu religion believes in the presence of God in every living soul. It places importance on good for everyone rather than good for just one. This is portrayed

during the Aarati where prayers are sung for the betterment of whole of humanity and coming together as one is the main aim. The end of the Aarati is marked by hailing for the wellness of every living soul and thanking God for the kindness bestowed by him.

Ref: https://pashupatinathtemple.org/photo-gallery/

**Photos of Pashupatinath temple, complex and surroundings:**

Pashupatinath Temple

## Statue of Hanuman:

## Pashupatinath complex:

## Pashupatinath cremations:

## Interior of temple:

## Night view...Pashupatinath temple surroundings:

## Big iron Trident and sadhus:

## Pashupatinath Temple:

## Temple on a sunny day:

## Night view of Pashupatinath:

## Pashupatinath Arti time:

## Midnight view:

## Pashupatinath temple Gajur:

## Glowing view of Pashupatinath:

**Links to videos:**

**Pasupatinath…Ancient Shiv Mandir:**

**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=17KvUDLFeMw**

**Visiting Pashupatinath temple:**

**https://handluggageonly.co.uk/2017/09/09/afternoon-pashupatinath-temple-nepals-sacred-temple-kathmandu/**

**Nepal Tourism board—Mahashivarathri:**

**https://www.facebook.com/nepaltourismboard/videos/1134806606873745/**

**Mahashivarathri ---2013:**

**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QE6KiDOSL-c**

**Mahashivarathri in Pashupatinath temple:**

**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fcnvcjOMdbM**

**Mystery of Pashupatinath temple:**

**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iBpuIG2ao-E**

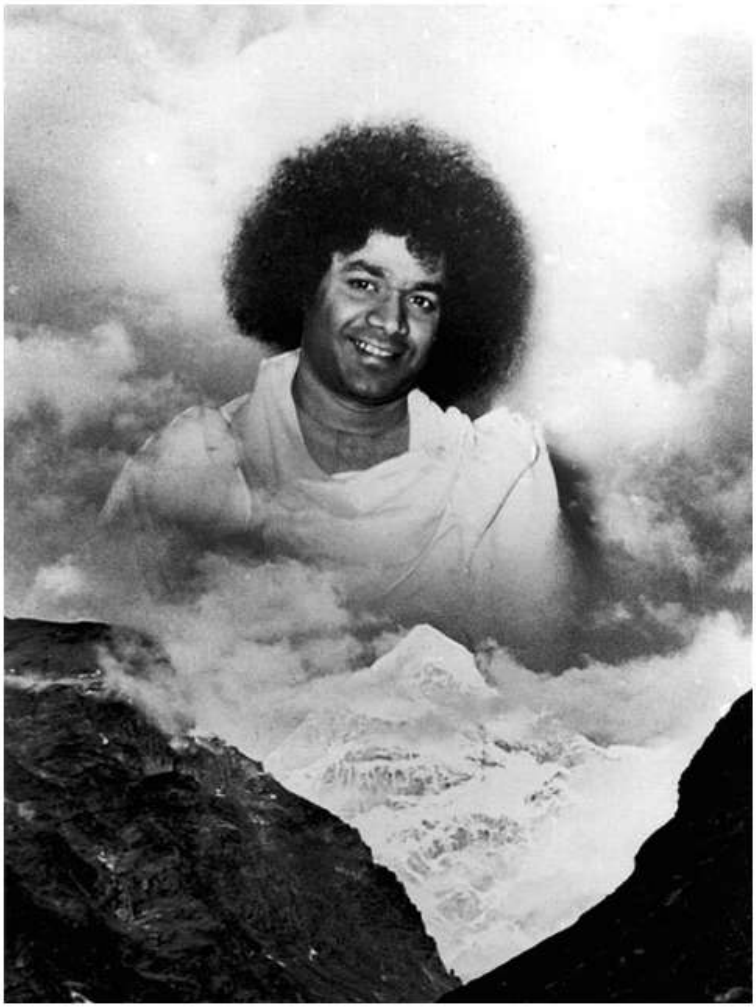
## APPENDIX-II

**In this Appendix, we give a brief account of Sri Sathya Sai Baba's visits to:**

A. **Badrinath (June 7 - July 4, 1961)**
B. **Ayodhya, Allahabad and Varanasi (March 23 –April 8, 1961)**
C. **Somanath Jyotirlinga temple in Gujarat (May 17-20, 1970)**

### A. Sri Sathya Sai visits Badrinath – Part-I (A Photo Feature)

**Ref:** https://sathyasaiwithstudents.blogspot.com/2013/06/swami-visits-badrinath-part-1.html



The Lord in the Badri Hills - June 1961

**Wednesday, June 07, 1961 to**
**Tuesday, July 04, 1961**

Swami and His party left Madras for Badrinath via Delhi on 7th of June, 1961. After a four day stay at Delhi, Swami proceeded to Badrinath along with Dr. B. Ramakrishna Rao, Governor of Uttar Pradesh, and His group on the 11th of June. Even before leaving Delhi, Swami had described in great detail the sacred shrine at Badri. Swami mentioned facts that were hitherto unheard of. For instance, no book has any mention of Shri Adi Shankara having brought from Kailash five Lingams, and installing them one each at Badri, Puri, Sringeri, Dwaraka and Chidambaram. Swami revealed to His devotees this secret.

Nandaprayag: The Confluence of the Nandakini and Alaknanda Rivers

Enroute to Badrinath, Swami visited Brahmakund, Srinagar and Joshimath. Swami halted at Nanda Prayag, the famed Kanva Ashram, and directed the devotees to bathe at the confluence of the Alakananda and Mandakini.

Rudraprayag: The Confluence of Mandakini and Alaknanda rivers

On 14th morning, Swami and party began the sacred 18 mile trek to Badrinath. The luggage were fastened to horses, mules and donkeys. Swami walked the first 11 miles to Lambagarh and halted the night there.

Sri Sathya Sai enroute Badrinath

The remaining distance too was covered on foot, and the party reached Badrinath on 15th noon.

Sri Sathya Sai leads the entourage through the Himalayas to Bardinath

The rest of the 15th and the 16th were spent in granting interviews to civil and military officers, and the members of the temple committee.

The Badrinath Temple

During the morning Abhishekam on the 17th, Swami chose to re-infuse the sacred shrine with eroded potency. While in the shrine, Swami materialised a beautiful Narayana idol. Soon, a thousand-petalled golden lotus followed by the Netralingam that Shri Adi Shankara had procured from Kailash, and installed in Badrinath, appeared mystically. Swami ordered all the devotees to sing Bhajans.

Sri Sathya Sai performing the Abhishekam

He materialised a hundred and eight golden Bilva leaves, and the magnificent "Thumme" blooms to adore the Netralingam. Swami performed the Puja with His own hands, and after the adoration, the "Netralinga" returned to its secret niche where it was installed 1,200 years back!

Sri Sathya Sai showing the Netra Lingam to the devotees

That day in the Divine Discourse, Swami said:

"This morning, I took out from its resting place the Netralinga (egg-shaped stone, representation of Shiva, with the eye of wisdom in it) which Shankaracharya had installed as the chief source of spiritual sustenance in this Shrine, and after Abhisheka (consecrating by sprinkling holy water and Pooja (ritual worship), it was sent back to the original place from where it will continue to scatter even more Grace on the pilgrims who come here.

Sri Sathya Sai in the temple precincts

Shankaracharya, when he first came here, he must have known this place and journeyed up by means of yogic powers had with him five Lingas, which he brought from Kailasha; the other four he installed, in strict conformity with the Shastras (scriptures), at Shringeri, Dwaraka, Puri and Chidambaram. Just as the mountains Nara Parvata and Narayana Parvata which form the back-ground of this temple have the Neelakantheshwara Parvata shining on the horizon between them both, this Narayana Shrine has a Linga from Kailasha as the core of its spiritual halo. The Ganga is born from the foot of Vishnu and it is sanctified by contact with the head of Shiva. Such stories are formed to teach that there is no difference between one aspect of God and another."

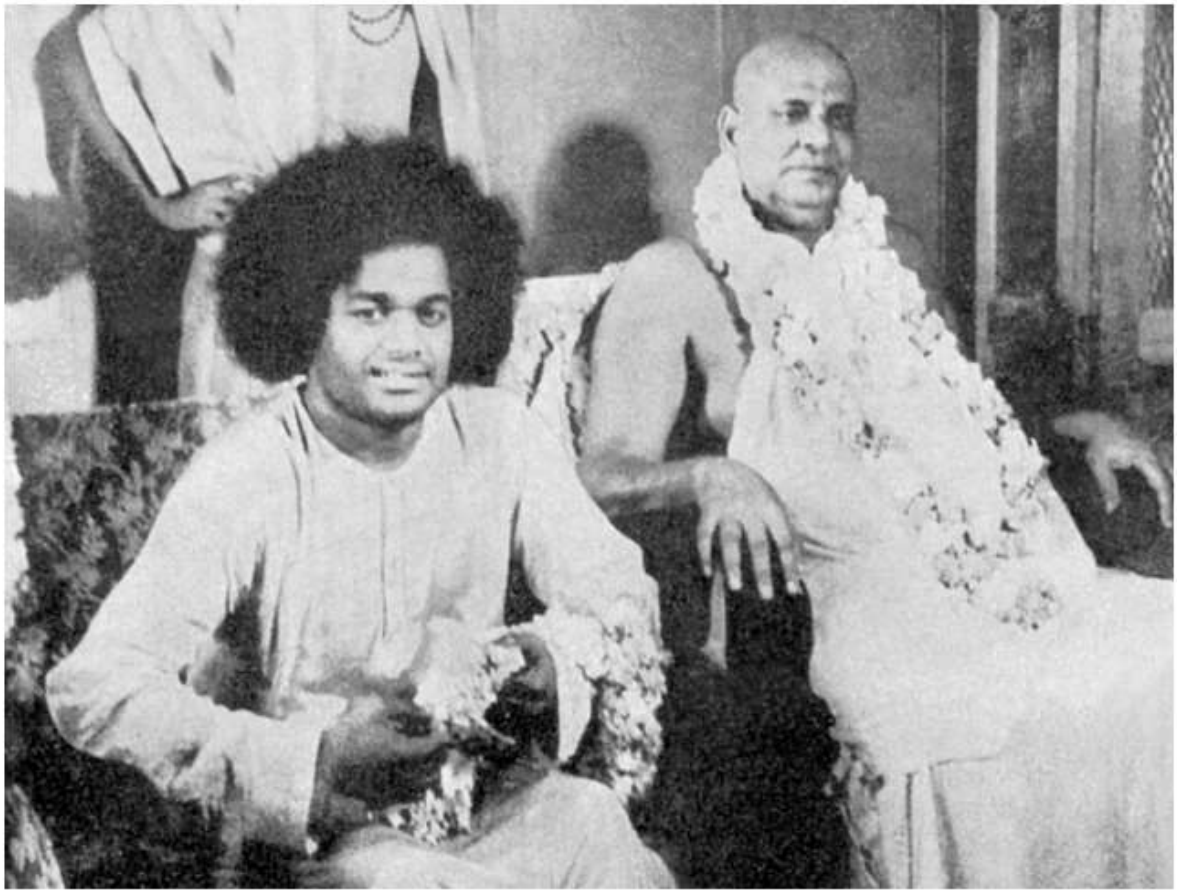
Sri Sathya Sai descending the steps of the Badri Narayana Temple

Continued in Part 2...

Source: Sri Sathya Sai Digvijayam Part 1 (1926-1985)

## Sri Sathya Sai visits Badrinath – Part-II (A Photo Feature)

**Ref:** https://sathyasaiwithstudents.blogspot.com/2013/06/swami-visits-badrinath-part-2.html#.Xty19kUzY2w



Sri Sathya Sai with Swami Sivananda at the Sivananda Ashram in Rishikesh

... Continued from Part 1

On His way back from Badrinath, Swami visited Haridwar, Sivanada Ashram at Rishikesh and Nainital. Swami rejoiced the devotees of Nainital at the Geeta Satsang with a Discourse. On that occasion He mentioned:

*"Swami Vidyananda, in the Hindi Address which he read just now, welcomed Me to this Nainital, describing its beautiful scenery and praising its climate. Well, that is taking Me to be an outsider, who has to be formally invited and welcomed. I am in your Satsang, for wherever the Geeta is studied, I am, and will be present. I do not care for the external beauty of nature as much as the beauty of 'character and of conduct' which you are seeking to acquire by the constant study of the Geeta. I came to the Geeta Satsang to see all of you, because I bless all efforts by man to raise himself by study and Sadhana. "Madbhaktah Yatra Gayante, Tatra Tishthaami Narada" is the declaration. "Wherever My Bhaktas sing of Me, there I install Myself." Why, the Lord is always there and everywhere whether you sing of Him or not. The singing only makes Him manifest, like the radio receiver which catches the tune from the-ether when it is switched to the correct wavelength. The current is flowing ever; when you fix the bulb, you will get the light.*

Sri Sathya Sai at the banks of the Ganga

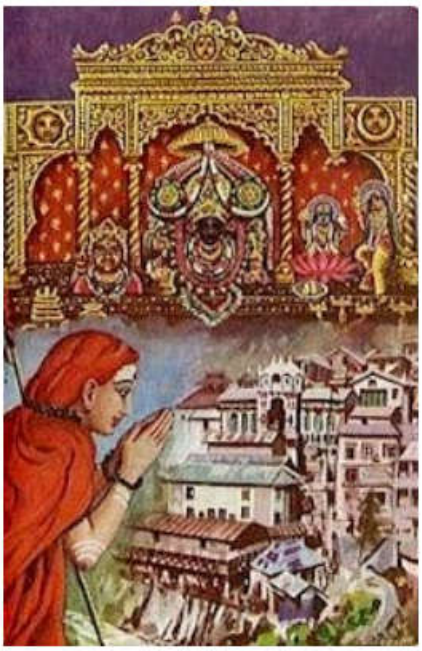
*The Bhagavad Geeta is a text book for all mankind, giving the secrets of spiritual science in clear and simple terms. But it will be useful only when the reader has as much detachment as Arjuna had when Krishna started the discourse. If you have as much Vishaada (despair) as Arjuna had, you have the Adhikaara (competence) to get the Teaching which removed the grief. Only a patient ailing from a disease is entitled to the specific which will cure it. What business have others with it? What profit can they draw from it? The Geeta will act on the mental system only when the symptoms of Vishaada (grief) are strong."*

He returned to Prasanthi Nilayam on 4th July, 1961, after nearly a month. On that very day, He gathered all the devotees in the Ashram and delivered a Divine Discourse reminiscing the momentous journey to Badrinath:

*"You are all waiting to hear from Me about the journey to Badri and what happened there. These people went to Badri and returned Bhadram (safe)! That is the story in a nutshell. For danger lurked all the time from fire, water, wind, sky and earth - all the five elements in fact. Every moment these people felt the Lord's Grace; for about 150 persons, mostly old and in indifferent health, to accomplish this Yatra (pilgrimage) without a single moment of even headache was due to Swami.*

Sri Sathya Sai showing the Netra Lingam to the devotees

*Swami also went to Badri because the Netralingam which is the central source of Holiness there had to be revived with spiritual efficacy. Shankaracharya brought five Lingams from Kailasha and installed one each at Dwaraka, Shringeri, Badri and Puri and the fifth he placed at Chidambaram. Of these, the one at Badri has the Narayana Amsham (orientation)and that had to be consecrated afresh. That was My task and these people who came with Me saw Me doing it.*



Shri Adi Shankaracharya
at Badrinath

*I had to accomplish it this year itself, for this is the 35th year after this Avatar took birth and this is also the year when the 35th successor to the Shankaracharya Peetha is at Shringeri. This year is therefore important for charging the battery of spiritual wealth, known as Badarikashrama. The Netra Lingam, laid by Shankaracharya underneath the idol there, was "taken" out by Me and Abhisheka (consecration by pouring holy water) was done with Gangotri water which I fetched by a wave of the hand. It was worshiped with golden Bilva leaves and Thumme flowers, both created by Me on the spot, and sent back to its original place. The Lingam was placed on a Golden Lotus, with three layers of petals, each having two smaller layers of 16 smaller petals, the entire Kamala (lotus) representing the Hridaya (heart) where the Lingam has to be installed for worship.*

Sri Sathya Sai followed by Sri Burgula Ramakrishna Rao, Governor of Uttar Pradesh and other devotees

*When you see the enthusiasm of the pilgrims who trudged along the Badri Road in thousands, you will be silenced with wonder; you will no more lament that atheism has become rampant in this land. With faith as their only support, people from all parts of India, men, women and children, old and young, stalwarts and decrepit, rich and poor, move on towards. Badri. There are many things which you can learn from their steady march towards the goal; that is the advantage in going on pilgrimage. You can develop your Bhakti (devotion), your Shraddha (faith) and your Sadhana (spiritual discipline) when you are surrounded by kindred aspirants. That is the greatness of that Narayana Murti at Badri.*

Sri Sathya Sai marching towards Badrinath

*Yes; the spiritual change must come about. That is the reason for the belief, "a mere sight of the pilgrim who has returned from Badri gives much merit." Of course, for undergoing that change you need not go so far; you have Badri Narayana here itself! Badri is the place where the Nara-Narayana bond is established and commemorated. That you can establish here itself. If you get rid of delusion, you become Narayana (God); if you are sunk in delusion, you continue to be Nara (human); that is all. There is no place to which I have not gone; there is no place without Me therein. So, the Bhaktas who came with Me were journeying to the Abstract with the Concrete, with the Pratyaksha to the Paroksha! That was their good fortune.*

Sri Burgula Ramakrishna Rao, Governor of Uttar Pradesh, in conversation with Sri Sathya Sai during the Pilgrimage

*Those of you who were here and could not join need not feel sorry, for all these days you were thinking of Swami and Swami alone and so your Sadhana was greater. After all, pilgrimage is for softening the heart, widening the outlook, expanding the circle of sympathy; not for collecting curios or pictures or Prasadam packets or idols and images. It is more a matter for the Netra (eye) than for the Patra (vessel). Pilgrimages should be as silent as the eye-lids dropping on the eye. Why should people wag their tongues and shout and wrangle when they are Godward bound? Truly, all Kshetras (places of pilgrimage) and all Yatras (pilgrimages) are in yourself. You are ever on a pilgrimage, though you might not have taken a step forward towards Badri or Kashi. Do not feel sad that you did not get the Abhisheka Teertha (holy water used for consecrating the idol) from Gangotri which was used for the Netra Lingam. I can see that all of you are desirous of getting it ever since you heard from others about the event at Badri. I shall get you the Gangotri Teertham here itself and give you, do not worry.*

Sri Sathya Sai with Pilgrims

*People may say that pilgrimages are a waste of time and money; but let Me tell you that it is the best way of spending time and money, provided one has real devotion. Bhakti is no sign of weakness; it is a sign of courage, of wisdom, of discrimination; it alone can give Saukhyam and Shanti (happiness and peace). Every one has one day or other to fall in line with you, for every one is terribly anxious to get these two. They try, in their ignorance or excitement, various other remedies, but this remedy alone can cure them."*

Sri Sathya Sai with Sri Burgula Ramakrishna Rao on the journey from Badrinath

Source: Sri Sathya Sai Digvijayam Part 1 (1926-1985)

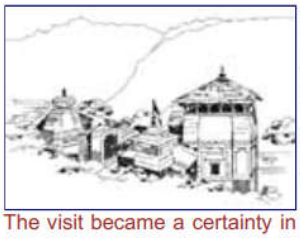
**Ref:**

**media.radiosai.org/journals/Vol_02/05March01/02_Cover_Story/baba_to_badarinath.htm**

## With Baba to Badrinath

**There is a distinct qualitative difference between Bhagavan Baba and all the other spiritual leaders one can think of. Baba himself was once asked about this, and he replied, "I have descended from the level of God to the level of man in order to uplift man. Others are humans trying to raise themselves up to the level of god." Despite this emphatic declaration, in the olden days, devotees often used to request Baba to take them on a pilgrimage to holy places. And the embodiment of compassion that He is, Swami often yielded to such prayers.**

**One such historic visit was to the holy shrine of Badrinath, nestling in the majestic Himalayas, the abode of Lord Shiva, the home of sages, and the destination of pilgrims through the ages.**
**We turn to the account left by revered Kasturi, of that trip.**



The visit to Badrinath was first mooted by Baba in 1958 at a Bhajan session held on the sands of the Chitravathi river. He then said that He would take devotees to the place where He was doing Tapas [penance]. We were wonder-struck because that was the first time we had ever heard of Tapas associated His Earthly Career.... I was a bit confused.....

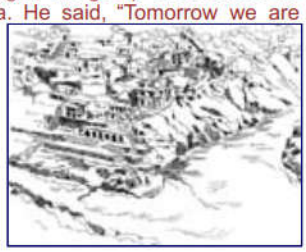
The visit became a certainty in 1961, and plans were ready; devotees who would accompany Baba had also been selected. Baba greeted them in Madras on 7th June, and sent them by train to Delhi. He announced then that He would fly to Delhi the following day and be there to personally receive the party on arrival.

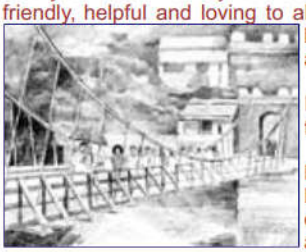
The train reached Delhi about six hours late, but Baba was there, shedding comfort and consolation with His smile and motherly-attention.

On the following day, the party left for Hardwar, where they were joined by Dr. B.Ramakrishna Rao, Governor of Uttar Pradesh. He too planned to visit Badrinath in the company of Bhagavan Baba.

On Sunday, 11th June, on the lovely little lawn behind the Dam Koti Bungalow, Hardwar,

tucked in between the Ganga Canal on one side and the Ganga river on the other, Baba addressed in the stillness of the night, the group of devotees He has gathered together for the Badrinath Yatra. He said, "Tomorrow we are leaving for Badri, a place consecrated by the Tapas of eminent sages and saints and of Sri Narayana Himself. You are all very fortunate indeed, for you are proceeding with the Manifested Form to the Unmanifested Form! There is a holy aura, a spiritual vibration, that pervades such sacred places and even Divinity acquires a new glory, as it were, when it is seen in the background of that aura. So, be ever alert to make the best of the rare chance that you have won by the accumulation of merit through many births. Be friendly, helpful and loving to all; repeat always the Name of the Lord; never loose courage or joy". He disclosed that the place was called Badarikashram, and that Lord Narayana was supposed to be doing Tapas here.



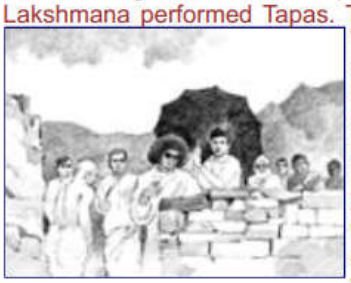


I began to see light, and the doubt that assailed me on the Chitravathi sands three years ago about 'Sri Sathya Sai and Tapas' melted away in a blaze of joy!

Baba then described to the group, the Shrine at Badrinath, how the Narayana idol appears often as a Lingam, sometimes as the Buddha and sometimes as Sakthi. He also gave details of the various subsidiary idols that are worshipped there. He spoke of the five Lingas brought by Sankaracharya from Kailasa and installed at Badri, Puri, Sringeri, Dwaraka and Chidambaram; of the Four Vedas which he revived by appropriate ritual, the Rig at Puri, the Yajur at Sringeri, the Sama at Dwaraka and the Atharvana at Badri. He put everyone into the pilgrim mood of expectancy and elevation, of Love, brotherhood and service.

Most members of the party had assembled at Madras on 7th June at the Yathiraja Kalyana Mantapam, Alwerpet and had reached Delhi on the 9th; there, they were joined by others from as far as Calcutta and Bombay and Lucknow. They had all arrived at Hardwar on 10th and proceeded to Rishikesh to see the holy spots there and to visit institutions like Swarga Ashram and Githa Bhavan and Paramartha Nikethan. On the 11th, they had witnessed the Evening Harathi to Ganga Matha at the Brahma Kund, a ceremony which was sanctified that day by the Presence of Baba at the sacred place, with H.E. B.Ramakrishna Rao, the Governor of Uttar Pradesh. Their Excellencies performed Harathi to Baba himself there, as a preliminary to their own Badri Yathra, along with the Bhakthas chosen by Baba.

From Hardwar to Badrinath, a distance of nearly 182 miles, every inch of the ground is saturated with history, myth and legend, all woven around the heroic endeavour of Tapas, whether by gods or men. Hardwar itself is the scene of Daksha Yagna and of the penance of the Seven Sages. At Rishikesh, Lakshmana performed Tapas. There is a Vyasaghat a few miles away where



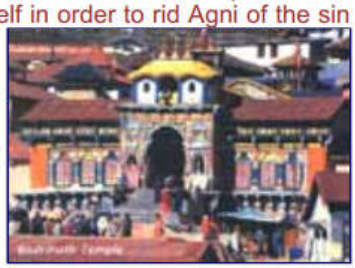
Vyasa did penance and at Devaprayag, the meeting place of the Alakananda and Bhagirathi rivers ( and what a marvellous Tapas it was, that of Bhagiratha which induced the heavenly Ganga to descend on Earth!) Sankaracharya did penance and installed a Siva – Parvathi Lingam! At Bilva – keda nearby, Arjuna went through rigorous asceticism to acquire from Siva the weapons for the up – holding of Dharma. At Srinagar, Sri Rama is said to have engaged in penance to realise Himself in the Siva Form! At Karna – Prayag where the Mandakini coming from Kedarnath joins the Alakananda, Karna prayed for years and years to get a vision of Surya. At Rudra Prayag, Narada did Tapas in order to become the Singer of Divine Glory and he won from Siva the Veena that plays upon; Nandaprayag, 33 miles away, is associated with the hermitage of Sage Kanva immortalised by Kalidasa. Rajarajeswari herself is said to have engaged in Tapas on the Saranyavathi river bank to acquire Siva as Her Lord; while, on the banks of the Virahi Ganga, Siva is described as having done penance to win Dakshayini back as His consort! At Bhavishya Badari on the way, Agasthya performed Tapas. At Joshimath, (elevation 6100 ft) Narada by His Tapas succeeded in getting possession of the Ashtakshari manthra which is the key to salvation; Markandeya performed austere penance here and Sankaracharya established a Mutt to revive and foster the Sanathana Dharma.

Beyond Joshi Math we have Pandukeswar, reminiscent of the Tapas of Pandu, Sesha – Dhara reminding us of the fact that the thousand tongued Sesha too was a Muni so that he might realise the Lord and Hanuman Chatti where Hanuman proved His superior prowess to the second of the Pandava Brothers; finally at Badrinath itself ensconced between the Nara and the Narayana

mountains, at the foot of the snow diademmed Nilakanta Peak ( the Queen of the Himalayas, 21640 ft high ) the Puranas declare Narasimha came to shed His ferocity and Narada, Agni and Indra did penance. King Visala by His Tapas there won the distinction of Badri being Badri Visal; King Ghantakarna by his austerity there won the honour being the watchman of the Lord. Uddhava is doing Tapas there even today by the special command of Sri Krishna. And the Lord Himself is depicted as in Tapomudra, in keeping with the elevating and inspiring mood of the entire Himalayan area for miles around and is worshipped by Gods for half the year and by men during the other half.

The Ganga from Hardwar to Devaprayag and the Alakananda from there onwards for over 138 miles keep inseparable company with the pilgrim, now coming up near the road in a surging swelling stream, now gliding deep down the yawing canyon, murmuring along a silver thread. At first, the roar of the waters is frightening but gradually the river becomes a friend and companion and the thunder of its waves is distinguished as but the recital of the Name of the Lord or of Om, His verbal symbol. O! What shall be said of the high voiced

Alakananda, the multimillionaire heiress of Kubera's wealth, gaudily tripping the rocks, from Alakapuri, his capital? And what of the tiny tributaries: the milk white Ksheeraganga. Neelaganga, the blue, Ghrithaganga the oily, Kanchanaganga the golden, Keerthiganga the famed, Rishiganga the ascetic, Virahiganga the forlorn! Consider all the hot springs at Badri which the God of Fire spouts forth in obedience to a command by Narayana Himself in order to rid Agni of the sin of being an Omnivorous Glutton.



What again shall be said of the magnificent 'manorama' of snow capped peaks and glaciers, enormous cliff's enervating gradients escarpments and precipices, cascades and springs, and the multicoloured flower carpets that are spread by nature in every little vale? Indeed, every step of that road is a stride towards God!

To be lead by Baba along this Holy road is indeed a unique piece of good fortune and when one looks back on the much talked of calamities that lurk round every curve, the landslides and the land slips, the unheralded breaches and blockades, the bitter cold, and the pouring rain, the strain and the exhaustion, one feels specially blessed because Baba's Abhaya Hastha was present always to stem the fall, to prop up the slip, to ward off the rain, to warm up the air, to inspire the drooping and refresh the tired.

The caravan of cars, jeeps, buses and trucks left Hardwar on Monday, 12th June at 8AM and reached Devaprayag at noon. The bath at the confluence was a refreshing and exhilarating experience. Srinagar, the ancient capital of the Kings of Garhwal, was reached in the afternoon and we halted there for the night. The people of Srinagar organised a programme of Pahari and Tibetan dances depicting the simple hilarity of the hardy tribesmen and Baba, Their Excellencies and all of us appreciated their earnestness and sincerity. On the 13th, the party left at Sunrise for Joshimath, 86 miles off, taking breakfast on the way at Rudraprayag, bathing at the junction of the Mandakini and Alakananda at Nandaprayag and taking lunch at Pippalkoti at about 3PM. The night was spent at the sacred Joshi math.

Bardinath was beckoning us from just beyond 18 miles! ……. Eighteen miles along a narrow five foot 'road' of rubble and stone, trodden into smoothness by million of pious feet; of sudden climbs and steep declines; of 'Danger from Falling Stones' announced on boards enroute! The rapture of ravine, cliff and snow ever before the eye, the cheer of the torrent ever in the ear! Broad glaciers bravely descending down the mountains into the river bed itself and even mischievously lying across the pilgrim path! Streams of pilgrims from every corner of this country crossing each other with a gleam in the face when the password, Jai Badri Visaal, is uttered!

Pilgrims resolutely pulling themselves along on foot, or pathetically perched on ponies trotting on the perilous edge of the precipices! Long lines of men, mules horses, yaks and goats loaded with beds and bundles, boxes, baskets and bags belonging to the pilgrims and silk and sandalwood, scents and sweets, flour, flowers and fruits for the shops at Badri Town!

All these give the Sacred Road a sublime sathsang atmosphere wherein the Lord is experienced as a constant and comforting Companion!

On the 14th morning, conveyances were booked, the mules and horses were loaded, and the party started off in high spirits, to Lam Bagar eleven miles away, where it was decided to halt for the night. Baba and a large number of devotees walked the entire length of the road. Oh! How can I adequately describe the tenderness with which He encouraged everyone along that arduous road, advising one person to get into a dandi, another to ride a horse, a third to check the pace, a fourth to rest awhile, keeping everybody's enthusiasm in good trim by a timely quip or joke or pleasantry, or sometimes even by means of the Divinely created Vibhuthi itself.

From Lam Bagar, it was an exhausting climb and the devotees succeeded in persuading Baba to ride a horse; but, to their great disappointment, He resumed His walk within a few moments. Badrinath was reached in the late afternoon on the 15th , and the party occupied the Gujarathi Dharmasala, very close to the temple.

On the 16th, Baba gave Darsan and blessings to a large number of officers and citizens and members of the Temple Committee and He attended the evening Arathi, in company with their Excellencies. Later, Baba inaugurated the X – ray unit at the Badrinath General Hospital. The first 'patient' to be screened was the doctor himself; he declared joyfully, "Babaji! You are seated in my heart!" Baba said , "The X – ray can't reveal it; but, it is a fact, Doctor, I know it". A supreme moment indeed, in the history of that hospital and the life of that doctor!

17th June was a Day of Days, a Day that will be enshrined in the memory of everyone in the party, for years and years. In pursuance of His Mission of re-infusing spiritual efficacy in all Holy Places where men congregate for acquiring peace and joy, a Mission which took Him recently to Ayodhya, Kasi and Prayag, Baba that day re –invigorated Narayana worship at Badrinath, by means of a unique cermony, whose significance is beyond our tiny understanding!

During the morning Abhishekam to the idol of Badrinarayana, while Baba was inside the temple facing the shrine, about 8.15AM, Baba mysteriously materialised a four armed Narayana icon with Sankha, Chakra, Gada and Padma, about 12 inches , perhaps sublimating in that form the Divine Essence of the Narayana Tejas before Him. He also created a charming thousand petalled 'gold' Lotus, and before the wonder of the people around Him could express itself in an awe striken gasp, He waved His hand before the Shrine and, lo, there was a Jyothirlinga in His palm, which He placed on the shining Lotus. Baba came away to the Dharmasala with the devotees and the large number of officers and citizens of Badrinath. Their Excellencies also soon joined the gathering.

Materialising a 'silver' Abhisheka Vessel full of holy water from Gangothri itself (as He announced), Baba Himself performed Abhisheka to that translucent Nethra Lingam. He had graciously taken the Linga round to everyone and made all to wonder at its quit effulgence and at a clearly visible Eye that was somehow incorporated in it. Devotees recited Sri Rudram, Purushasuktham and Narayana Suktham, while Baba was pouring the sacred water on the Lingam. Then, Baba created 108 miniature Bilva leaves or rather replicas of that holy leaf, in 'gold'; they fell in a lightning shower from His Palm on to a silver plate. He again waved His Hand and this time, O Blessed moment, 108 actual 'thumme' flowers fresh with even the touch of the morning dew, fell from that Divine Palm! With these, Baba directed Dr.B.Ramakrishna Rao, presumably on behalf of all assembled to do Puja to the Linga, the Ashtottara Puja, as mentioned in the Sastras. After Puja, Baba collected the Abhisheka Ganga and gave a share of it to each one, Himself pouring it into the mouth with His own merciful Hand.

Needless to say, the Lingam, one of the Five, which according to Baba, Sankaracharya brought from Kailasa, and which he installed in a sacred spot in the shrine to vivify the Badarikasram returned to the place from which Baba had drawn it for this epoch making ritual of re invigoration. The Lotus and the Icon, He granted to the devotees; the Bilva leaves of 'gold' He gave to members of the party, as mementoes of the Momentous Day, for being duly worshipped by them.

About 12.30PM, the same day, Baba condescended to come to Brahmakapal, where the devotees had arrived to offer oblations to the pitris (forefathers). He advised everyone to pray for their ancestors and departed relations, in a spirit of faith and sincerity. Every member of the party had a rare good fortune of paying off the debt to the departed in the immediate presence of the Lord Himself!

Then Baba went down to the Alakananda and took from the surging torrent a glass of water, but, lo! The glass held also a lump of Vibhuthi with the mark of Pranava on it and the til essential for ancestral rites! He poured the water on to the palms of the devotees who were handicapped by disqualifications form partaking in the Pinda Pradan, asking them to offer that water instead! Surely, the manes of all who shared in that day's Brahmakapal ceremony are thrice blessed!

In the evening at 6PM., the Badrinath Temple Committee accorded a welcome to Baba at a formal ceremony at the Temple premises, which His Excellency Dr.B.Ramakrishna Rao also attended. About 3000 thousand pilgrims and citizens attended and the precincts were packed to capacity. Baba spoke of the five Lingas brought by Sankaracharya and of the sanctity of Badri. He asked everyone to decide for himself where real happiness lay and rigorously to pursue the path to win that happiness. He emphasised that Prema is the very essence of Bhakthi, the light with which the Lord (who is Premaswarupa) can be seen and realised and understood. He asked the citizens of Badri to appreciate the ordeals, trails, tribulations and expenses undergone by the pilgrims, the illnesses and accidents which they had braved, and the faith which heartened them from the first step to the last. He advised that they should learn from the pilgrims a part of their faith in Badri Narayana and treat the pilgrims with greater kindness and brotherliness. Dr.B.Ramakrishna Rao translated Baba's Telugu speech into Hindi.

The Secretary who thanked Baba said that the announcement, regarding the 5 Lingams, and Badri being repository of one of them will thrill everyone and will instill greater faith in Badri in the hearts of every Hindu.

In the night Baba arranged for the feeding, on a truly lavish scale, of all the mendicants around the Temple of Badrinath and He distributed a blanket each ( or its equivalent in money) to more than five hundred peple. No wonder they all joined in the chorus of thanksgiving and cheered "Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba Ji Ki Jai".

On the 18th, about 9AM, Baba and the devotees left Badri and, reached Lam Bagar for lunch, halting for sometime on the way to bless the organisers of a Yajna named Sri Rama Krathu. The next day, Joshi Math was reached and the return journey by bus and car was undertaken from there on Tuesday, 20th.

It is worth noting that Baba walked back the distance from Badrinath to Joshi Math and on the second day, he was among the earliest to reach the destination, ascending the steep heights of the Vishnu Prayag Joshi Math mountain road, without the least sign of tiredness.

Baba had said during the forward trek that the rains shall not come until the party was back in Rishikesh and true to His command, the rains held back, until the 'caravan' was within 20 miles of Rishikesh when the party got the first drops of drizzle!

It must be mentioned that while nearing Rishikesh, Baba miraculously anticipated, by a few minutes, a landslide which came down across the road causing even a slip, but only after all members of the party had safely come across the doomed spot. A party of more than a hundred devotees, mostly old and not quite sturdy could go through all the tossing and twisting in the buses and all the tramping and climbing of the hills, in strange climes and with strange foods and come back hale and hearty, as per schedule, only through the Ever present Grace of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

We were all back in Hardwar on Wednesday 21st June and we left on 22nd for Dehra Dun, from where we had to entrain for Delhi. Baba encouraged all the devotees to collect Gangajal from Brahmakund so that they could take it to their homes. He had a kind word and an encouraging smile for everyone. He came to every bus when the party was on the point of leaving. He blessed everyone and commanded them to share their joy with others and to life thereafter everyday of their lives as real pilgrims towards the seat of Narayana. With our eyes full of tears of joy, we sat in the bus, unable to speak, for when the heart is full, the tongue is silent.

Baba left for Naini Tal from Hardwar; He spent three days there with Their Excellencies, but they were, inevitably busy days full of interviews with a large number of high officers and dignitaries, who had come for Baba's Darsan. Baba also visited the 'Githa Sathsang' established by Swami Vidyanandaji. A welcome address in Hindi was presented to Him at the Sathsang. He addressed the members on the need for practicing the path of Sadhana laid down in the Githa.

In the discourse Baba said, "Mere scholarship is just a burden, without putting what is studied into action. It is only that part of it which is put into practice, felt and experienced that becomes one's undisputed possession". Baba pointed out, "The Githa was propounded to every one who is afflicted with the delusion and ignorance. Arjuna was just a representative of struggling mankind, at the crossroad of conflicting duties, without the Light necessary for discovering the right path". "In the 18th Discourse, Krishna asks Arjuna, "Has all these been heard by you, with one – pointed attention ? Has the delusion caused by ignorance of the Reality been destroyed?" This shows that the purpose of the Githa is to destroy Moha, or Delusion, which is the result of misunderstanding the unreal as real, the transitory as the permanent, the source of sorrow as the source of joy" Baba concluded. He said that the Githa was a Universal textbook of Spiritual Science which could be studied and practised by people of all climes and creeds. The only qualification needed was a yearning for the higher ideals and an earnestness to discover the source of lasting joy.

Baba returned to Delhi on the 26th and emplaned for Madras on the 27th. He reached Madras just in time to meet the members of the party who arrived by train from Delhi the same evening, and to send them with His Blessing to their respective homes.

Baba reached Puttaparthi at noon on 3rd July and the Bhakthas there welcomed Him with great Joy. On the 4th, Baba gave the devotees a graphic description of the journey and an inspiring account of the Three Eventful Days at Badri. He wanted that everyone should draw inspiration from the devotion and faith of thousands of old, decrepit and poor pilgrims who brave the dangers and disasters of the road every year, just to get a glimpse of the Lord in the Badri Narayana Form. He said that those who visit Holy Places must prove in their daily lives that the holiness has entered their hearts and changed their habits and thoughts for the better. He said that Sankaracharya installed the Narayana idol at Badrinath, and every one must install the Name of Narayana in the Shrine of the heart. Then, He gave every one the Theertha of Gangothri with which He had performed the Abhisheka at Badri as well as the prasad of Badri itself.

That was the blissful consummation of the Badri Yatra for all.

With the Manifested, we proceeded to the Unmanifested! At every step among the Himalayas we experienced the Prema of the Lord whose was with us! At every turn, His Grace guarded and guided us.

May He be our Guard, our Guide and our God forever!

**Video links:**

**Radio Sai - With Baba to Badrinath:**
https://es-la.facebook.com/radiosai/videos/with-baba-to-badrinath-a-short-video-of-sathya-sai-babas-ba/1058200194269118/

**Watch "Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba Visits Badrinath" on YouTube:**
https://youtu.be/eBxD65dLjy8

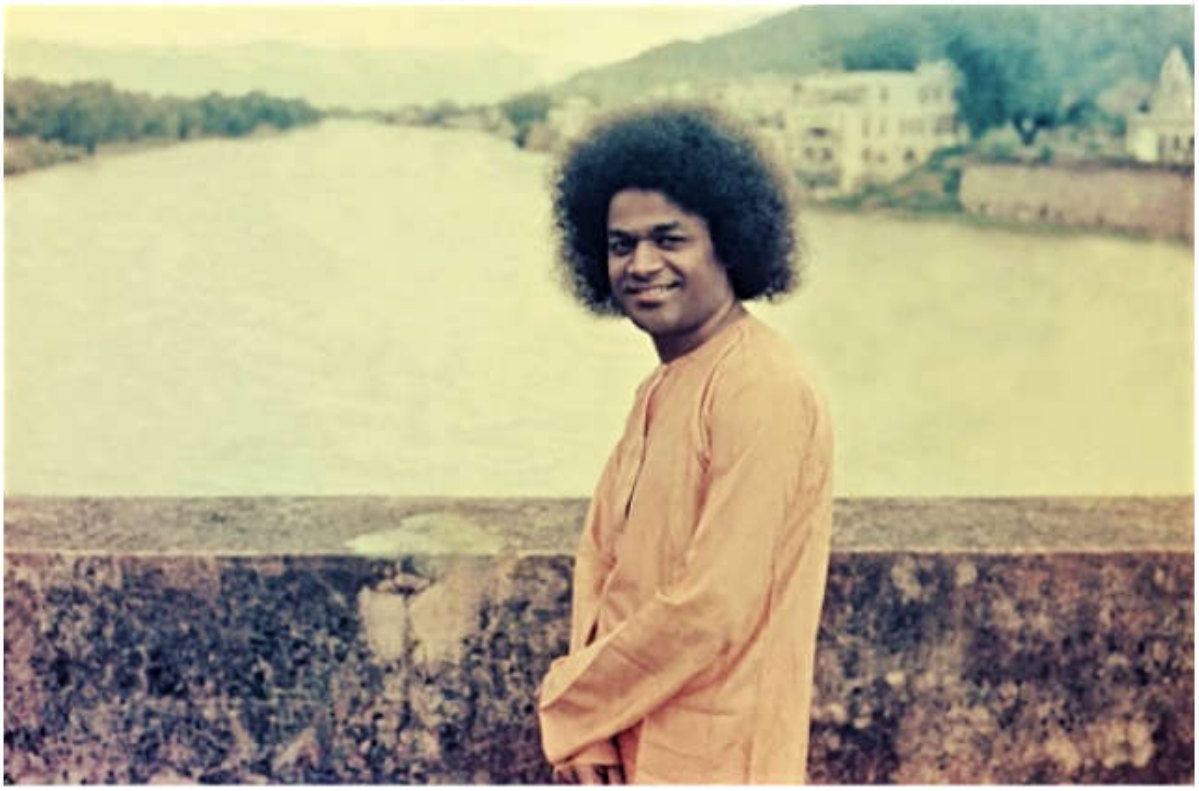
**Box link to download Sathya Sai Speaks..vol.2 (regarding visit to Badrinath):**

https://app.box.com/s/ubacix8x8qbmwu2frak2e4wimp7oew72

**(See Lectures 8, 9, 10 and 11)**

**B. Sri Sathya Sai visits Ayodhya, Allahabad and Varanasi:**

**Ref:** https://sathyasaiwithstudents.blogspot.com/2013/04/when-rama-visited-ayodhya-in-kali-yuga.html#.YGGjP9Izbcs



Sri Sathya Sai at the banks of the Holy Ganga

Thursday March 23, 1961 to Saturday, April 08, 1961

Swami's visit to Ayodhya and Varanasi via Madras

Swami visited Sri Sathya Sai Samaj, Perambur (Madras) on its fourth annual day which fell on 23rd March, 1961. He blessed the devotees with His Divine Discourse at the Perambur Railway Institute Stadium. Dr. B. Ramakrishna Rao, Governor of Uttar Pradesh, also addressed the devotees. On Sri Rama Navami day, the Telugu Edition of *'Sathyam Shivam Sundaram'*, and the English version of *'Dhyana Vahini'* were dedicated at Swami's lotus feet at Santhi Kutir. Dr. B. Ramakrishna Rao presided over this celebration as well. Swami, in His Discourse, elaborated on the philosophical meaning of the Ramayana.

Governor's Residence (Raj Bhavan) at Lucknow

On 26th, Swami left for Lucknow along with the dignitaries in a specially chartered plane. Swami stayed in the Raj Bhavan (Governor's residence) and blessed the devotees with His daily Darshan. On 30th, the Andhra, Kannada, Tamil and Kerala Sanghas jointly arranged a welcome function for Swami at the town hall. Swami addressed those gathered on this occasion.

Banks of the River Sarayu at Ayodhya

Swami and His entourage of dignitaries proceeded to Ayodhya on 1st April. Swami pointed out to the devotees the various spots sanctified by their association with the Ramayana. He said that the people there were suffused with Bhakti, for He said that He could hear the unceasing *'Rama Naama Japam'* emerging from their hearts. Swami blessed all the devotees at the banks of the river Sarayu.

The sanctum sanctorum of the Kashi Vishwanath Temple

The party reached Saranath on the same night and visited the Vishwanath temple at around 11.00 am the subsequent morning. Inside the shrine, Swami materialised Vibhuti and sandal paste and applied them on the Linga. He then created a priceless jewel and placed it on the Linga Mukha. He blessed each devotee with the holy water of the Ganga.

Prior to the Vishwanath temple visit, Swami led the party to a Hanuman temple on the banks of the river Sarayu. Legend has it that this land was awarded to Hanuman by Lord Sri Ram so that he may establish there in a kingdom ever resonant with the *'Rama Nama'*.

The party then proceeded to Annapurna temple, Birla Vishwanath temple and the Benaras University Campus. Swami returned to Allahabad on 2nd April night. Swami visited the Triveni Sangam along with the devotees on the 3rd. Swami then led His party to the Hanuman temple, the Akshaya Vata and the Saraswati Kupa. Swami sent His party back to Lucknow by car. Swami and the dignitaries travelled to Lucknow by train. Swami sent His party back to Madras and stayed on at Raj Bhavan for one more day. On that day, He met General Thimmaiah and other top ranking officials of the Army, Navy and the Air Force.

Devi Annapurna at the
Annapurna Temple, Varanasi

Swami left for Madras on 5th April. On the 6th, He inaugurated the Tyagaraja festival at Tirupati. He addressed the large gathering with the following Message:

"In spiritual matters, experience alone is the deciding factor. Reason is rendered dumb before the testimony of actual experience. All the arguments of logic, all the tricks of dialectics are powerless to nullify the direct effect of that inner evidence. For example, take the question of image worship. Many people laugh at those who practise it and condemn it as superstition. But those who do worship idols have the faith that the Omnipresent Almighty is present in the symbol before them. For them, it is not a mere external adjunct or apparatus or object. It is a part of the inner mechanism of devotion and faith. Of course, all the "worship" carried out with the idea that the idol is lifeless wood or stone or bronze is so much waste of time. But if it is done in the full confidence that the image or idol is alive, saturated with consciousness and power, then image worship can bestow Realisation of Godhead itself.

## The spiritual aspirant should see the power inherent in the idol

A spiritual seeker once approached a guru for guidance. The guru gave him an idol of Vishnu and also necessary instructions for daily worship. But the seeker found that, even after some months of meticulous worship, he did not get any spiritual reward or elation. So he reported his dissatisfaction, and the guru gave him another idol, this time of Siva, and asked him to have another try. The disciple came after another six months demanding another idol, because even Siva had failed him. This time, he got a Durga idol, which he duly installed in his domestic shrine. The two previous idols were standing, dust-ridden and neglected, on the window sill. One day, while ritual worship of the Goddess Durga was going on, the disciple found that the perfumed smoke from the incense stick was being wafted by the breeze toward the idol of Siva on the window sill. He got wild that the ungrateful stone-hearted God who was deaf to his powerful entreaties should get the perfume intended for his latest idol! So he took a piece of cloth and tied it round the face of Siva, closing up the nostrils that were inhaling the perfume. Just at that moment, to his immense surprise Siva appeared in His Splendour and Glory before the seeker! The man was dumb-founded. He did not know how the ill-treatment had induced Siva to give him Darshan. But what had really happened? The seeker for the first time believed that the Siva idol was alive, conscious, full of life (Chaitanya-full), and it was that belief which forced him to tie the bandage to the nose. The moment he realised that the idol was full of consciousness (Chit), he got the Realisation he was struggling for. Therefore, the spiritual aspirant should see not the stone, which is the material stuff of the idol, but the Power that is inherent in it, that is symbolised by it, the same Power that is inherent in his own heart and that pervades and transcends all creation."

He returned to Prashanti Nilayam on the 8th. Swami blessed each devotee with Ganga water on the 13th.

Source: Sri Sathya Sai Digvijiyam Part 1 (1926 to 1985)

## C. Sri Sathya Sai at the Somanath Jyotirlinga temple in Gujarat

**Ref: https://sathyasaiwithstudents.blogspot.com/2018/05/sri-sathya-sai-at-somnath-jyotirlinga.html**

# Sri Sathya Sai at The Somnath Jyotirlinga Temple in Gujarat

Like 762

May 17-20, 1970

The visit to Somnath is vividly described by Prof. Kasturi, who was present that day in the sanctum sanctorum. He writes:

"The 17th was an epoch-making day. Baba 'charged the Somanath Shrine' that day with Divine potency. He also fulfilled the prayers of the late Jamsaheb of Nawanagar, the person primarily responsible for the renovation of that historic temple, by visiting the place and allowing His Name to be associated with a structure that is a limb of that complex. The Rajamata succeeded in persuading Baba to inaugurate the imposing architectural gem called Dig Vijaya Dwar (after Sri Digvijaya Singh, the late Jamsaheb), the Gateway of Victory.

The Majestic Somnath Temple on the Shores of Arabian Sea in Gujarat

This temple is situated on a spot celebrated in the Vedas and Epics. The shrine is of Shiva, as Sauma, with Uma, as Shiva-Shakti. Baba has come as Shiva-Shakti in human form to charge the ancient shrine with Divine potency. The Shivayogis who specialized in Soma Vidya and the followers of the Paasupatha cult founded by Sage Lakulisa about 200 AD, spread the fame of this temple from sea to sea. They established Somanaths with Somesvara Shrines all over the land, in Ratnagiri, E. Godavari, Purnea, Jodhpur, Mysore, and South Kanara Districts.

Somanath was one of the richest temples of India. When the Muslims conquered and ruled over the Punjab and Sindh, it attracted the plunderers. Depredation, desecration, destruction, reconstruction and re-dedication became recurring chapters of its long history. The infamous raid by Mahmud of Ghazni in 1026 AD was the third in the long list of catastrophes. The fifth temple too met with a similar fate, at the hands of the rulers of Delhi.

Somnath Temple Ruins - late 1800s

On Diwali Day, 1947, when the Indian Army entered Nawabdom of Junagadh and liberated the pathetically dilapidated pile of stone recognized by many as Somanath, it was rescued from those who could not appreciate the value and validity of idols, images and symbols of the Unknown and the Unknowable. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel announced that day, amidst the joyous roar of the waves of human and saline seas, "We have decided that Somanath should be reconstructed. This is a holy task in which all should participate."

Sardar Patel and Jamsaheb at Somnath Temple post-1947

The new temple (named Mahameru Prasad, like the previous ones) was planned closely on the basis of the earlier temples and now, the Gopuram, the main gateway through which seekers would enter into the portals of Jyotirlinga, was to be inaugurated by Someshwara, come in human form: Shiva-Shakti, come as Sathya Sai!

Baba declared that He would reveal, that day the genuine Somanath! This declaration filled us with wonder and enthusiastic exuberance. So all roads converging from Jamnagar to Somanath were shouting Jais in exhilaration. Baba was received at the decorated Shamiana in front of the Digvijaya Dwar by the trustees of the Somanath temple, as well as by the high officers of the District and States. Amidst strains of temple music, He walked on the red carpet laid on the steps, and opened the lock on the artistically carved and silver-embossed door with a silver key. Then, He proceeded along the festooned pathway, between rows of fresh banana trees, to the main shrine of Someshwar, the focal point of the faith of millions for millennia!

The 'Digvijaya Dwar' at the entrance of the Somnath Temple that was inaugurated by Sri Sathya Sai

He entered the holy of holiest; Brahmin Pundits were reciting Vedic Hymns, which reverberated from the arched and conical roof, from the finial 150 feet above the ground! He directed that a plate be brought. He spread the fingers of His right hand and shook it over the plate, 108 silver Bilva leaves and 108 golden flowers fell from His hand in a clinking shower. Devotees' reverentially touched them for it is on their behalf and for their sake that he was undertaking the process of 'charging the 3 feet high Lingam'. This Lingam had been recently installed, when Rajendra Prasad, President of India, inaugurated the Temple. He poured the leaves of silver and flowers of gold on the Linga, as He had done at Srisailam when He was set on revitalizing the Linga there. It was like Ganga water poured into the stream of the Ganga.

Within seconds, He waved that Divine hand! Lo and behold, a ball of brilliant light manifested in His palm. The Somanatha Linga is the only one of the twelve which is adored as Jyotirmayam, "Imbued with the splendor of light." And, Baba had the "Linga of Light" right now in His grasp! What a great moment was this, I wondered. Then I remembered Baba's announcement: "I shall show you the genuine Someshwara Linga today!" so, this was It, the Genuine One, installed, as legend says, by Brahma Himself, and worshiped by the Moon-God, the God who presides over the mind of man.

In a pamphlet issued by the tourist department, it is said that Skanda Purana mentioned thousands of years ago that "the Sparsha Linga of Somanath is a 'Swayam-Bhu' (self-originated) Linga, of great prowess, as bright as the sun, of the size of an egg of a hen, which is situated underground." It is a characteristic of Vayu, air. These are the other Lingas representing the other four elements: Akash, Tejas, Jal and Pruthvi.

Sri Sathya Sai in the *Garbha Griha* (sanctum sanctorum) of the Somnath Temple with the materialised Sparsha Linga in His Right Hand

So the oval ball of light in His hand was the authentic Someshwara He had resolved to bring up from its underground niche, kept away since many centuries from depredation and desecration. The Sparsha (touch) Lingam was nestling for centuries under the Linga in the Shrine. This information was given to us by Baba, as well as by the priests and trustees. Baba waved His hand again and created a silver stand on which it could be placed. He gave it to the chief priest, "Let it be in the full light of day hereafter! Let pious eyes admire its brilliance and imprint its glory on their hearts. There is no need any more to keep it away. The Avatar has come to remove all fear," Baba declared."

To make the triumphant emergence of Someshwara, Baba unfurled the flag on the towering finial over the central shrine. Thousands acclaimed 'Jai Bhagawan' as He gave Darshan on the temple steps."

Baba left for Rajendra Bhavan at Veeraval and at 2 pm, He motored to Keshod aerodrome from where He enplaned for Bombay. Over 30,000 devotees were awaiting the arrival of Baba at Dharmakshetra, Bombay.

Swami visited Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan on the 18th in order to bless Dr. K. M. Munshi. Swami left for Brindavan on the 20th. Swami graced the inaugural function of the Bharat Engineering Workshop on the 25th. He gave a Discourse at the function.

Source: Sri Sathya Sai Digvijayam (1926-1985)

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**Ref:** https://m.facebook.com/radiosai/posts/from-now-on-this-temple-shall-ever-remain-free-from-any-attack-sathya-sai-babas-/1135956383160165/

On the invitation of the Rajamatha (Maharani) of Jamnagar, Baba visited the Somanath temple in Gujarat. 'Soma' means : SA + UMA, i.e., Lord Siva, together with His consort, Uma, also known as Parvathi. It is well known in history that King Mohammed of Ghazni invaded India several times. He ransacked this rich temple time and again and carried away huge hoards of jewellery of gold and diamonds. On the last raid, he uprooted the majestic Siva lingam and looted the large quantities of precious stones embedded underneath the deity. In place of the original Lingam thus desecrated, the temple priests installed a new stone Lingam, and ever since carried on the prescribed sacred services to the newly anointed deity. Digvijaya Sahed, the Maharaja of Jamnagar, was keen to restore the temple

to its pristine glory. It entailed expense of enormous labour as well as resources. Despite these problems, he persisted with his mission and finally crowned the beauty of the temple by erecting a mighty tower. Named Digvijaya Gopuram (temple tower), it was inaugurated by Bhagavan Sai Baba. Entering the sanctum sanctorum of the temple, He materialized golden bilva leaves (bilva leaves are considered to be particularly dear to Lord Siva) and showered them on the four-feet high Lingam as abhishekam. By His Divine Will, He brought out the Lingam into His hands and showed it to the gathering. It was shimmering bright like lightning. After revitalizing it with His divine touch, He did not return it to its earlier invisible abode as He had done in Badarinath. Instead, He declared, "From now on, this temple shall ever remain free from any attack. No despoiler from any quarter shall lay his evil hand on this temple. There is no danger to it anymore. I am therefore making this Lingam freely available for public darshan and worship by devotees." He then materialized a silver peetham (pedestal) and installed the Lingam thereon.( **Source: Tapovanam Radio Sai Team | Facebook)**

**Watch "Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba | Divine Visit to Jamnagar, Dwaraka, Somnath | May 1970" on YouTube:**

https://youtu.be/8V_8UjnlQlo

**APPENDIX-III**

**A very good site for stotras, ashtottara etc on various Gods (you can choose the language too):**

**https://vignanam.org**

**Some Shlokas on Shiva:**

# शिव पञ्चाक्षरि स्तोत्रम्

ॐ नमः शिवाय शिवाय नमः ॐ
ॐ नमः शिवाय शिवाय नमः ॐ

नागेन्द्रहाराय त्रिलोचनाय
भस्माङ्गरागाय महेश्वराय ।
नित्याय शुद्धाय दिगम्बराय
तस्मै "न" काराय नमः शिवाय ॥ 1 ॥

मन्दाकिनी सलिल चन्दन चर्चिताय
नन्दीश्वर प्रमथनाथ महेश्वराय ।
मन्दार मुख्य बहुपुष्प सुपूजिताय
तस्मै "म" काराय नमः शिवाय ॥ 2 ॥

शिवाय गौरी वदनाब्ज बृन्द
सूर्याय दक्षाध्वर नाशकाय ।
श्री नीलकण्ठाय वृषभध्वजाय
तस्मै "शि" काराय नमः शिवाय ॥ 3 ॥

वशिष्ठ कुम्भोद्भव गौतमार्य
मुनीन्द्र देवार्चित शेखराय ।
चन्द्रार्क वैश्वानर लोचनाय
तस्मै "व" काराय नमः शिवाय ॥ 4 ॥

यज्ञ स्वरूपाय जटाधराय
पिनाक हस्ताय सनातनाय ।
दिव्याय देवाय दिगम्बराय
तस्मै "य" काराय नमः शिवाय ॥ 5 ॥

पञ्चाक्षरमिदं पुण्यं यः पठेच्छिव सन्निधौ ।
शिवलोकमवाप्नोति शिवेन सह मोदते ॥

# लिङ्गाष्टकम्

ब्रह्ममुरारि सुरार्चित लिङ्गं
निर्मलभासित शोभित लिङ्गम् ।
जन्मज दुःख विनाशक लिङ्गं
तत्प्रणमामि सदाशिव लिङ्गम् ॥ 1 ॥

देवमुनि प्रवरार्चित लिङ्गं
कामदहन करुणाकर लिङ्गम् ।
रावण दर्प विनाशन लिङ्गं
तत्प्रणमामि सदाशिव लिङ्गम् ॥ 2 ॥

सर्व सुगन्ध सुलेपित लिङ्गं
बुद्धि विवर्धन कारण लिङ्गम् ।
सिद्ध सुरासुर वन्दित लिङ्गं
तत्प्रणमामि सदाशिव लिङ्गम् ॥ 3 ॥

कनक महामणि भूषित लिङ्गं
फणिपति वेष्टित शोभित लिङ्गम् ।
दक्षसुयज्ञ विनाशन लिङ्गं
तत्प्रणमामि सदाशिव लिङ्गम् ॥ 4 ॥

कुङ्कुम चन्दन लेपित लिङ्गं
पङ्कज हार सुशोभित लिङ्गम् ।
सञ्चित पाप विनाशन लिङ्गं
तत्प्रणमामि सदाशिव लिङ्गम् ॥ 5 ॥

देवगणार्चित सेवित लिङ्गं
भावै-र्भक्तिभिरेव च लिङ्गम् ।
दिनकर कोटि प्रभाकर लिङ्गं
तत्प्रणमामि सदाशिव लिङ्गम् ॥ 6 ॥

अष्टदलोपरिवेष्टित लिङ्गं
सर्वसमुद्भव कारण लिङ्गम् ।
अष्टदरिद्र विनाशन लिङ्गं
तत्प्रणमामि सदाशिव लिङ्गम् ॥ 7 ॥

सुरगुरु सुरवर पूजित लिङ्गं
सुरवन पुष्प सदार्चित लिङ्गम् ।
परात्परं (परमपदं) परमात्मक लिङ्गं
तत्प्रणमामि सदाशिव लिङ्गम् ॥ 8 ॥

लिङ्गाष्टकमिदं पुण्यं यः पठेश्शिव सन्निधौ ।
शिवलोकमवाप्नोति शिवेन सह मोदते ॥

**Another very good site one can refer for Vedas, samhitas, aranyakas, upanishds etc etc:**

**www.vedicheritage.gov.in**

**Vedic Mantra collection .. Mantra sangrah:**

https://www.drikpanchang.com/vedic-mantra/mantra-collection.html

**Link to Sanskrit mantras, prayers etc:**

https://www.hinduwebsite.com/mantraslinks.asp

**Mantras, shlokas, stotras for Hindu Gods, Goddeses:**

https://www.templepurohit.com/mantras-slokas-stotras/

**Box link to download ebook..Daily prayers.pdf (in Sanskrit+English):**

https://app.box.com/s/0gz5k856mzne79jc255ycngjg9ye7ttb

**Box link to download ebook..Devata stotras.pdf (in Kannada):**

https://app.box.com/s/7rh6het5atjnd18bg33cjs1vbjwdh6y4